

## **Development Challenges Specific to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**

### **Recommendations of the National Advisory Council**

#### **Background**

i Tribal communities live in about 15% of the country's landmass in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains to forests, hills and inaccessible areas. They encompass a wide diversity of cultures, systems of self-governance and livelihood systems and are provided special protection by Schedules V and VI of the Constitution. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life at one end of the spectrum, there are tribal groups, at the other end, who are characterized by (a) forest-based livelihoods, (b) pre-agriculture level of existence, (c) a stagnant or declining population (d) extremely low literacy and (e) a subsistence economy. Such tribal groups are 75 in number residing in 17 States and 1 Union Territory have been identified and categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups).

ii As per 2001 census, the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) have a total population of 27,68,322, and live in remote and scattered geographical locations. The ranking of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in terms of their population in different States is given in Annexure 1. In five States namely, Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh), Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the PVTGs constitute more than 77% of their total population covering 38 out of the 75 PVTGs. Annexure 2 gives the list of 19 PVTGs having less than 1,000 population. At the other extreme, there are 4 PVTGs having a population of more than 50,000 but less than a Lakh (Annexure 3) and there are 8 PVTGs who have more than 1 Lakh population. (Annexure 4).

iii Each of the 75 PVTGs is small in number, culturally different from one another and lives in remote habitat with poor administrative and infrastructure back up. The PVTGs are becoming increasingly vulnerable due to loss of their customary habitats and the livelihood resources which sustained them due to non-recognition of their rights. This is leading to hunger/starvation, malnutrition and ill-health and erosion of traditional occupations, which is threatening their very survival. Some of them are even on the verge of extinction. They include Shompens, Jarawas, Sentinelese of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Bondos of Orissa; Cholanaickans of Kerala, the Abujhmarias of Chhattisgarh; and Birhors of Jharkhand. The protection of their land and resources is central to the dignified survival of all tribal people. Therefore as a priority, the rights of the PVTGs to their land and habitats must be recognized and respected. Other peoples' notions of development must not be imposed on PVTGs. It is essential that they must be able to determine and control the nature of development they have. The PVTGs are in need of special and undivided attention on priority for their protection and support in view of their fragile living conditions and prevailing socio-economic vulnerability and diminishing numbers.

iv The recommendations are classified in four categories (i) identification of PVTGs and assessment of their vulnerabilities; (ii) recognition of rights of PVTGs, development approaches and livelihood strategies; (iii) institutions for governance and service delivery; and (iv) nutrition, health and education.

(I) Identification of PVTGs and Assessment of their Vulnerabilities

**Recommendation 1**

*Ministry of Tribal Affairs to facilitate specially designed Census for the PVTGs which should also cover, in addition to their enumeration, their status of health, education, and housing.*

1.1 As the regular Census does not comprehensively capture the data on PVTGs, a specially designed Census for these communities needs to be conducted, which apart from their enumeration, will also cover their status of their health, education and nutrition, using the services of social/cultural anthropologists, Tribal Research Institutes, Anthropological Survey of India along with Anthropology Departments of local Universities which are best suited to carry out this task.

1.2 The census should geographically map out their habitat, habitations/settlements, resources and resource use, livelihood patterns, alienation from land, alienation from resources etc. comprehensively, including the changing patterns of lives and livelihoods.

1.3 Within the 75 PVTGs, those groups whose population is declining should be clearly identified and survival strategy for such groups needs to be devised.

1.4 PVTGs threatened with relocation from wildlife areas or by development projects should be identified and actionable strategies developed to prevent the same. The Ministry of Environment and Forests and the National Tiger Conservation Authority must ensure that no relocation of PVTGs (and other forest dwellers) takes place from protected areas without recognition of rights under FRA and after obtaining prior informed consent of the Gram Sabhas of not only villages facing direct relocation but also villages whose other rights (such as NTFP collection, grazing, and cultural and religious rights) are being affected. Non recognition of rights of PVTGs living in protected areas and tiger reserves and relocations without following legally mandated procedures must be addressed in accordance with the provisions of FRA and the 2006 amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act

1.5 Wherever displacement and relocation becomes absolutely essential appropriate strategies be evolved for providing them facilitative support and rehabilitation.

1.6 There is a need to assess, through conducting a survey, the degree of indebtedness of the PVTG households to the local money lenders so that measures can be taken to redeem their debts and make them debt free.

**Recommendation 2**

*Prepare vulnerability indices of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)*

2.1 There is a need to recognize that PVTGs, unlike, the rest of the population, are particularly vulnerable to sudden intrusions or changes in their life. The impact leads to shocks, most often experienced at the collective level, and of such intensity, that they are also

known to succumb due to inability to withstand the mental and resultant physical trauma. Having not experienced such drastic and rapid changes in their past, they have not developed coping mechanisms as other communities have, and hence tend to perish collectively.

2.2 An assessment of vulnerability needs to be undertaken not only because vulnerability is an inherently important dimension of well-being but also because such an assessment serves other important instrumental functions: it informs the design of survival and development strategies, it highlights the distinction between poverty prevention and poverty alleviation interventions, and clarifies the role of risk in the dynamics and persistence of poverty. Because of the many risks households face, they often experience shocks leading to a wide variability in their income. In the absence of sufficient assets or insurance to smooth consumption, such shocks may lead to irreversible losses, such as distress sale of productive assets, reduced nutrient intake, or interruption of education that permanently reduces human capital, locking their victims in perpetual poverty.

2.3 Vulnerability index for each PVTG should be developed. The vulnerability indices need to be developed keeping in mind the fact that the nature of vulnerability varies across PVTGs and approaches towards their sustenance and development should be informed by the specific nature of their vulnerability.

2.4 Financial and other resources allocated for the PVTGs should be in accordance with the degree of vulnerability of the PVTGs.

2.5 It should be recognized that many PVTGs have their own strategies to protect themselves against times of hardship such as droughts etc. These may include growing a variety of crops and traditions of sharing and ensuring that the vulnerable and elderly are cared for by the whole community. It's essential that these systems are understood and not undermined by development initiatives.

## (II) Recognition of Rights of PVTGs, Development Approaches and Livelihood Strategies

### **Recommendation 3**

*Generate awareness about the vulnerabilities of the PVTGs and the need to respect, protect and recognize their rights, especially to their land and customary habitats.*

3.1 There is need for recognition of the innate connection between PVTGs and their land and habitats is fundamental. Without security of tenure over their land and habitats, PVTGs will not be in a position to make informed choices about their futures. Protection of their land and resources must be at the very heart of any policy or development initiatives concerning PVTGs.

3.2 A rights-based approach to development of PVTGs needs to be adopted. Suitable measures should be taken for protection and promotion of their rights (especially to their land and customary habitats) and empowerment of rights-holders to exercise their rights. Simultaneously, accountability of duty bearers should be ensured.

3.3 Suitable steps need to be taken to make PVTGs aware of their rights under Schedule V of the Constitution, PESA and FRA (full names) and targeted efforts to be made to support them in having their rights to community tenures of habitat and habitation recognized and protected on a priority footing.

3.4 Strict controls need to be imposed so that no development can take place on PVTGs' land and habitats without their free, prior and informed consent.

3.5 PVTGs be empowered and their capacities built to articulate their priorities and communicate their demands for facilities and services through their traditional institutions rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all development programme, which is often inappropriate and undermining;

3.6 There is need for development of methodologies to support duty-bearers in their efforts to integrate rights-based approach into sector programming, capacity development to undertake research, policy formulation and programming using rights-based approach.

3.7 Issues which cause exclusion of the PVTGs from regular development programmes, resulting in inequitable or adverse outcomes need to be identified and appropriately addressed.

#### Recommendation 4

*Monitor rigorously the status of implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA) and PESA vis-à-vis PVTGs in various States so that the progress on how different States have recognized land/ habitat rights of PVTGs can be precisely tracked*

4.1 It must be recognized that several policies and laws that attempt to redress the disadvantages faced by tribal groups are already in place. More recently, the Government of India has legislated to empower the Scheduled Tribes to control their own development through self-rule. There are several policies in place to secure the rights of tribals to their land, natural resources and livelihoods. One of the most important pieces of legislation is PESA. It is unique in being in consonance with customary laws, focusing more on tribal hamlets functioning as units of self governance rather than on revenue villages or Gram Panchayats. Some steps have been taken to operationalise PESA – State amendments have been passed but rules have only been notified in 3 States out of 9 and monitoring is underway. The State amendments are not in total harmony with PESA and most subject laws are yet to be amended in compliance. Field studies reveal that many people on the ground are not even aware of the legislation. The recent Forest Rights Act (FRA) is a major step further as it aims to undo the historical injustice done to forest dwelling communities by recognizing their pre-existing rights over their customary lands, forests and habitats and empowers gram sabhas to protect and manage forests, wildlife and biodiversity while preventing destruction of their natural and cultural heritage.

4.2 Section 3(1)(e) of the FRA provides for recognizing “rights, including community tenures of habitat and habitation for primitive tribal groups and pre- agricultural communities” while section 2((h) defines “habitat” to include “the area comprising the customary habitat and such other habitats in reserved forests and protected forests of Primitive Tribal Groups and pre-agricultural communities and other forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes”. In its ‘Frequently asked Questions’ about the FRA, the Ministry of Tribal

Affairs has clarified under point 7 that *“the right to community tenures of habitat and habitation may be recognized over customary territories used by the PTG for habitation, livelihoods, social, economic, spiritual, cultural and other purposes. In some cases the habitats of PTGs may overlap with forest and other rights of other people / communities.”*

4.3 The FRA amendment rules now provide that *“In view of the differential vulnerability of PVTGs, the District Level Committee shall ensure that all PVTGs are conferred habitat rights, in consultation with their concerned traditional institutions and that their claims for habitat rights are filed before the concerned Gram Sabhas wherever necessary by recognizing floating nature of their Gram Sabhas.”*

4.4 Determined efforts should be made to ensure that several States which not yet recognized the habitat rights of PVTGs do so in a time-bound manner. This has been partly due to lack of clarity about how boundaries of their habitats are to be demarcated, the fact that not all land in their habitats is forest land over which rights can be recognized under the FRA and partly due to the wide diversity in the livelihood systems and resource use patterns of PVTGs. PVTGs encompass perhaps the maximum diversity in their life styles and livelihood patterns. They include hunter-food gatherers, foragers, shifting cultivators, cattle grazers, pastoralists, forest produce gatherers, nomadic, settled agriculturists, basket weavers, etc. While many have well defined territories comprising their habitats, others live in settled habitations while still others are nomadic.

4.5 State governments need to be urged to recognize PVTGs habitat rights over revenue land using PESA, Schedule V and other State laws for protection of tribal lands. Sometimes complications arise because the habitat of some PVTGs is not predominantly forest land, it is often a mix of revenue and forest land and in some cases predominantly consists of revenue land. This is leading to serious problems in the recognition of their habitat rights under the FRA as the FRA is only applicable to forest land. Barely 10% of the habitat of the Bondas in Malkangiri district of Odisha consists of forest land - all the rest is revenue land under constant threat of being handed over to corporate or for other development projects. MoTA is currently thinking of mapping the customary habitats of PVTGs. However, that will have little meaning unless their communal tenures over their habitats comprising both forest and revenue land are secured. This will need to be addressed.

4.6 Given that secure tenure and rights over their habitat and natural resources is the foundation on which reducing vulnerability of PVTGs depend, it is recommended that:

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs together with the State Governments accord first priority to ensuring that the habitat and other forest rights of PVTGs are recognized at the earliest; and
- Detailed guidelines be developed for mapping habitat boundaries and identifying seasonal resource use patterns in the case of nomadic PVTGs, on a case to case basis in consultation with the traditional leaderships of these groups. Conventional approaches have not produced the desired results, particularly with respect to reducing poverty and vulnerability.

#### Recommendation 5

*Undertake an assessment of the status of PVTGs who have been displaced with or without compensation/ rehabilitation and devise support mechanisms for ensuring their livelihoods.*

5.1 It is important to recognize that the livelihoods of PVTGs are subsistence in nature, closely linked to land and natural resources, including forest products. Most PVTGs are forest dwellers whose ancestral territories have been notified as reserved forest, protected forest and also National parks, Tiger Reserves and sanctuaries without recognizing their rights. Most of them do not have a concept of private property and their customary community lands have been declared state owned forest or revenue lands leaving them most vulnerable to eviction and displacement without any entitlements to compensation or rehabilitation. The PVTGs have been living in greater harmony with nature and their life style has been one of the closest to nature. The livelihood of the PVTGs and their culture are intertwined with land and the forest. They have lived in a harmonious and sustainable way drawing their sustenance from the flora and fauna which regenerate naturally.

5.2 Future strategies need to factor in the fact that many PVTGs have already been displaced by dams, mining and other development projects or relocation from their habitats notified as sanctuaries or national parks/tiger reserves and are no longer in their original habitats. Displaced Baigas from the Achanakmar wildlife sanctuary in Chhattisgarh, for example, are landing up in distant urban slums, losing access to all the special benefits designed for them. Many Chenchus in Andhra Pradesh have similarly been pushed out from the Srisailem tiger reserve. Many more are under threat of similar displacement or relocation from their traditional territories in the name of economic advancement or wildlife conservation. But in return they receive landlessness, impoverishment and long term degradation of the environment on which they wholly depend. For almost two centuries now, tribal communities, like many other non-tribal peasants and forest dwellers, have been witness to the collapse of their multiple relationship with the land, the forest and among themselves. Rehabilitation policies must be sensitively designed to benefit even those who were indiscriminately displaced earlier without adequate

5.3 In view of the demographic profile of the PVTGs and shrinking of their forest based resources, protection of the PVTGs assumes priority. Hence, it is recommended that the protection of their land and habitats against incursions and the recognition of their right not to be displaced without their free, prior and informed consent must be of foremost importance.

#### Recommendation 6

*Develop livelihood strategies and design development programmes for the PVTGs that are rights-based, factor in the felt-needs of the community, take into consideration their special vulnerabilities and empower them to negotiate their livelihood concerns.*

6.1 PVTG vulnerabilities in the fields of health, nutrition and food security can best be addressed through a community specific approach for their specific needs instead of the plethora of standard government schemes and programmes. This would require the creation of a special mechanism that would facilitate these communities to determine what they need on a continuing basis. Financial support to such an approach would require untied funds. These vulnerabilities are perpetuated because of lack of access to and poor functioning of and

inappropriate implementation of government food transfer programmes, such as Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), lack of an appropriate nutritional programme; high survival risks on account of preventable illness and poor health services, leading to high mortality rates among infants and children in particular and high morbidity among adolescent girls, which affects their reproductive health and increases reproductive risks. Without insuring against these risks livelihood programmes are not likely to be sustainable in the long run.

6.2 An enabling environment needs to be created in which the PVTGs make their own development choices by putting them at the heart of the process and thus allowing them to choose options which are not homogenized, structured and too programmatic. Also, it is important to equip the PVTGs with such skills and capacities which give them power to negotiate their livelihood concerns with greater confidence in positive outcomes.

6.3 There is need for sensitivity in the design of programmes for PVTGs. Most PVTGs enjoyed 'Sustainable livelihoods' as long as they retained access to their livelihood resources. This needs to be combined with ensuring them, protection of their land and resources, and allowing them to choose and control how they live their lives. This may well involve enhancing their capabilities, but these projects should be requested by the PVTGs rather than imposed by outsiders. Some communities may wish to continue living on a subsistence income, although this will undoubtedly not be the case for all access to social and economic services which effectively deals with their manifold vulnerabilities through sensitively crafted institutional mechanisms which respect their cultural traditions and self governance systems instead of attempting to 'mainstream' them.

6.4 Caution must be exercised while devising programmes for the PVTGs. There is a significant risk that their vulnerabilities can be exacerbated, rather than reduced, by government interventions which undermine the self-sufficiency of tribal communities and fail to respect their right to choose development as appropriate to their needs and priorities. For example, complex, drought-proof tribal food systems can be undermined by government food distribution policies. Whilst it is vital that urgent needs are met and severe problems such as malnutrition are avoided, it is imperative that this is done in a manner that supports existing food production and distribution systems often incorporating rich indigenous knowledge, agrobiodiversity and nutritional security.

6.5 Some specific suggestions which could be considered while planning for the PVTGs include the following:

- Alienation of land in PVTG habitats, even by other tribals, must be prevented;
- Creation of awareness in the PVTGs about their rights under the FRA needs to be generated;
- Recognition and protection of PVTGs' community tenures over their habitats should be secured;
- Development of livelihood strategies for the PVTGs should factor in their often nomadic lifestyle and their unique skills and indigenous knowledge;
- Respecting and protecting the diversity of their livelihood systems including rotational cultivation involving rich knowledge of agrobiodiversity and ensuring food security to all members of the community through allocation of communal land on the basis of number of mouths to be fed. If PVTGs choose to move towards a more settled agricultural system, their food security for at least two food crops should be ensured.;
- Conservation and enhancement of their traditional skills and rich indigenous knowledge need to be recognized and strengthened, such as (i) Irulas in snake catching

and venom extraction, (ii) Todas in dairy and horticulture, (iii) Mankidias in rope making, (iv) Kattunaickens in honey collection, (v) Rajis in wooden vessel craft, (vi) Kotas in metal work, etc.

- Value addition in minor forest produce for PVTGs, who depend substantially on cash income from collecting and selling this produce could be ensured by requisite training and capacity building so as to enhance their incomes ;
- Transition from nomadic to settled lifestyle should be solely based on the choice of the community, no external pressures need to be applied. Assistance in changing to an agricultural economy needs to be provided. Productive land should be allotted to the PVTGs. Most PVTGs have little or no consciousness of private property and all efforts of private land distribution among them have eventually led to their being dispossessed of the land. A case in point is that of the Saharias of Rajasthan or the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh. Even under the Forest Rights Act, the practice of recognizing PVTGs rights over small patches of individual land must be stopped and replaced by recognizing community tenures where these are still prevalent;
- Protection of PVTGs' land and resources to so that they are able to remain self-sufficient. However, in lean season or rainy season employment could be provided, if requested, and if not, free ration could be given to protect them from mal-nourishment and starvation;
- Provision of insurance for PVTGs against natural calamities, from wildlife and diseases by paying premium including health card;
- Announcement of a Minimum Support Price for the crops which are being traditionally being cultivated by some of the PVTGs;
- Engagement of ethno-agricultural scientists who specialize in the crops which are cultivated by the PVTGs should be commissioned;
- Alienation of PVTG lands and habitats, even by other tribals, must be prevented and diversion/allocation of their lands for development projects must only be permitted with their prior informed consent as mandated by the Supreme Court judgement of April 18, 2013 in the case of Dongaria Kondhs and as mandate by the FRA;
- Allocation of land to displaced or relocated landless households among the PVTGs should be ensured, forest enclosures should be earmarked for the PVTGs;
- Provision of job assurances to PVTG men and women in government at different levels;
- Distribution of Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cards to the PVTGs;
- Identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers among the PVTGs be undertaken on priority;
- Provision of basic infrastructure such as communication, roads, foot paths and suspension bridges (in interior areas), check dams for water harvesting etc as desired by the community;
- Provision of irrigation facilities such as minor irrigation tanks and common community halls / youth hostels / dormitories could be provided if requested by the PVTGs; and,
- Provision of electricity, where appropriate solar lights, could also be offered.



### (III) Institutions for Governance and Service Delivery

#### Recommendation 7

*Institutionalize participatory process within existing structures and programmes, placing PVTGs at high priority.*

7.1 It is to be recognized that top-down government development efforts targeted at enhancing tribal livelihoods have not been successful as people do not have stake and ownership in them. There is a need to develop a comprehensive framework to assist the PVTGs in a manner that empowers them to determine their own development path at their own pace. Good and effective development frameworks for the PVTGs can be prepared only by allowing them to articulate their own priorities and demands based on their felt needs in a diverse socio-cultural milieu.

7.2 It is vital that development programmes are not centrally devised and then handed down to PVTGs to 'participate' in. Participation should be at all stages of the process and should start from the bottom up. The State should participate in delivering the development that the PVTGs consider that they need in consultation with them based on an understanding of their eco-cultural settings, governance systems and their felt needs. Planned interventions can succeed only if they are in consonance with the cultural norms of the community. The pace and direction of change must be acceptable to the people which is possible only if the PVTG communities are facilitated in evolving their own development paths within the self-governance framework mandated by PESA.

7.3 Some specific suggestions which could be considered while working towards a more participatory approach for the PVTGs include the following:

- Strengthen and revitalize the traditional institutions and governance systems of the PVTGs rather than super-imposing new and one-size-fits-all institutional structures on them;
- Promote institutions that support PVTGs to lead their own development;
- Identify and recruit facilitators who can work with the communities to strengthen the local institutions;
- Conduct training and build capability for social mobilization which should become an integral and regular aspect of programme design and implementation; and
- Institutionalize the process of building expertise and developing skills so that the capabilities that are developed are sustained.

#### Recommendation 8

*Evolve effective service delivery mechanisms, working with the PVTGs to enable them to choose their development priorities on their own terms.*

8.1 It must be recognized that the most significant challenge in delivering social services in PVTG areas is that of poor physical access which results in service providers reluctant to be deployed in such areas as also a very high level of absenteeism among them. Often frontline workers resign even before attending their first training, others continue to draw

salary despite not visiting the Anganwadi Centre or primary health centre (PHC) for long periods. Some of the incentives to work in tribal areas (e.g. an increase in retirement age; reduced entry level qualifications; re-hiring of retired functionaries) do not appear to be having the desired effect.

8.2 Service providers need to be well incentivized to perform their duties and remain stationed in the areas where PVTGs reside. There is need to create additional residential infrastructure for service providers working in tribal areas, i.e. residential clusters where government officials of different categories and different departments can be accommodated. In very remote areas where this cannot be done, mobile services might be an alternative option. Lessons can be learned from Brazil where tribal people themselves have been trained in primary health care and are, with radio support from health care professionals, able to treat all but the most serious cases themselves. Besides absenteeism, reports from the ground suggest significant mistrust between tribal communities and service providers who are largely non-tribal. This is, in part, based on negative prejudices about tribal peoples among service providers which must be addressed squarely. Set against these contextual barriers, planners, programmers and functionaries find it difficult to deliver the multiple schemes on offer for the PVTGs. A common refrain is one of demand being weak and supply non-responsive.

8.3 Some specific suggestions which could be considered while developing effective service delivery mechanisms for the PVTGs include the following:

- A single-window approach for bringing development programmes to the PVTGs compared to the system of multiple agencies currently in force. The Conservation-Cum-Development (CCD) projects for PVTGs through special development agencies and micro projects being supported by MoTA need restructuring. Community specific programmes need to be developed in response to the specific needs of each community. Development of PVTGs cannot and should not be equated with schemes and funds on the assumption that effective implementation of these schemes would automatically 'develop' PVTGs;
- Identification and deployment of officials who are sensitive to the tribal culture and ethos, and incentivizing them to remain and work in PVTG areas;
- Training and capacity building of tribal people themselves to administer healthcare in their communities with support from medical professionals while also building upon their traditional knowledge;
- Conduct of regular social audit of the development programmes involving the members of the PVTGs;
- Strengthening the Tribal Development and Research Institutes in the States so that services of the research and training personnel could be availed of on regular basis for evaluation and monitoring of the PVTG development programmes;
- Separate norms for recruitment in tribal areas which could be different from the non-tribal areas. Even the norms for deployment of government staff in tribal areas could be different from the non-tribal areas; and

#### (IV) Health, Nutrition and Education

##### Recommendation 9

*Control factors - relating to health and nutrition - that contribute to decline in population of PVTGs.*

9.1 It is critical to recognize and take note of the factors that contribute to the decline in population of certain PVTGs. These include malnutrition, diseases like sickle cell anemia, tuberculosis, cerebral malaria, drug and alcoholic addiction, communicable diseases including venereal diseases, maternal mortality, infant mortality and loss of reproductive ability/fertility. Effective, preventive and curative health systems should be developed, taking into account the ecological and cultural aspects and with appropriate Institutional, Educational and Communicative inputs. The health facility should be acceptable, accessible and affordable.

9.2 Some specific suggestions which could be considered while developing the action plan for arresting decline in the population of some PVTGs include the following:

- Warding off malnutrition and poverty amongst PVTGs must be seen as closely linked to protection of their land and resources.
- A special food security programmes needs to be initiated in the area to prevent wide spread malnutrition;
- Viral hepatitis infection is a common malady in PVTGs and its prevention and control needs to be high on the agenda;
- An intervention program aimed at prevention and control of malaria should be initiated immediately considering the high prevalence of malaria fever the National Malaria Control programme needs to be further strengthened;
- Prevention and control of scabies also needs to be initiated urgently;
- The National Nutritional Anemia Prophylaxis Programme should be strengthened considering the high prevalence of iron deficiency;
- De worming facility should be provided to all children up to the age of 14 year, including those in Ashram schools;
- Bed space (at least 50 ft<sup>2</sup>/person) should be increased in the Ashram schools; and
- ICDS activities (Anganwadi) should be expanded to every tola. Vitamin A supplementation requires to be undertaken for all the children upto 12 years age;
- Sanitation program also needs to be strengthened as, according to a survey, only 7.4% households have sanitary latrines;
- IEC campaigns need to be stepped up to make PVTGs aware about the various health programmes available for them;
- Shortage of health workers in the PVTG locations needs to be addressed. One health worker for every 1000 population needs to be provided while ensuring that such workers are adequately sensitized to the unique characteristics of PVTGs and to their culture and identity;

## Recommendation 10

### *Launch a special drive to improve the educational status of the PVTGs*

10.1 It is significant to note that despite several campaigns to promote formal education the literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes in general and the PVTGs in particular has remained low and the female literacy rate lower compared to the national average. Alienation from the society, lack of adequate infrastructure like schools, hostels and teachers, abject poverty and apathy due to irrelevant curriculum and content and not teaching in tribal languages have stood in the way of Scheduled Tribes in getting formal education.

10.2 It must be recognized, however, that tribal children, even if they do not go to school, are not "uneducated". They are taught traditional skills on how to feed their families, treat the sick and practice their rituals and have considerable ecological knowledge. Formal education, although sought after by many, need not be forced on those PVTGs who do not desire it. Instead a learning pedagogy that consolidates and builds upon their knowledge should be facilitated.

10.3 Lessons should be learned from the experiences of tribal peoples in other countries. Schooling for PVTGs need to be embedded in the community and should involve adults from the community in both teaching and supportive roles as much as possible. Rather than removing children from their communities and cultures, schools should promote respect for, and knowledge of, the child's culture. It is imperative that children are taught in their mother tongue at least in the early years and that some teaching and activities in the mother tongue continue throughout the school.

10.4 Some specific suggestions which could be considered while planning for improving the educational status of the PVTGs include the following:

- Development of a curriculum for education of PVTGs which should be locally relevant, culturally sensitive and communicated in innovative ways and in vernacular languages;
- Support to the PVTGs to organize their own education/learning initiative in the community;
- Adoption of a consultative approach in which PVTGs should provide input about the sort of schooling they want for their children so that the curriculum is relevant and meaningful to them;
- Location of schools preferably in the community, lessons in their mother tongue and teaching hours such that they are compatible with the community's other responsibilities;
- Selection of teachers who are sensitive to the special circumstances of the PVTGs and respect their culture and uniqueness;
- Regular monitoring and review of school drop-outs and incentivizing a community adult to be able to motivate and bring back children to school. Assessment of reasons for drop-outs and their addressal rather than coercion of children to continue if there are genuine problems;
- Special monitoring of the Tribal hostels by a local committee consisting of a Headmaster, Government Official / local Panchayat Member or President and the local Tribal Chief and one or two tribal representatives;

- Development of special programmes for strengthening their traditional talents in archery, trekking, knowledge of agro-biodiversity, fauna, flora and wild life etc should be undertaken using the expertise within the community as the main resource for learning;
- Arrangement for special tuition for the PVTG children from class VIII, IX and X in the subjects such as science and mathematics;
- Promotion of sports facilities in hostels for volley ball, foot-ball, shuttle, carom or local traditional game facilities;
- Encouragement and incentive to those who pass SSLC by using them as animators or volunteers or community workers; and
- Preferred treatment to PVTGs with minimum educational qualifications in certain category of Government jobs

9.5 Focus should be on engaging, as far as possible, front-line workers who are local tribals and can contribute significantly to the special needs of the community. With progressive improvement in the educational status there will be adequate numbers of local persons to take up jobs of nurses, teachers, doctors for their own areas.

#### **Recommendation 11**

*The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in consultation with State Governments, concerned Departments and stakeholders to draw an Action Plan to carry out the above mentioned recommendations in a time bound manner*

## Annexure - 1

<i>Ranking of the PVTG Population in Different States (2001 Census)</i>				
<i>Sl.No.</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>No. of PVTGs</i>	<i>Population 2001 Census</i>	<i>Ranking population - wise</i>
1	Chattisgarh + MP	08	7,85,720	1
2	Maharashtra	03	4,08,668	2
3	Jharkhand	09	3,87,358	3
4	Andhra Pradesh	12	3,34,144	4
5	Tamil Nadu	06	2,17,937	5
6	Tripura	01	1,65,103	6
7	Gujarat	05	1,06,775	7
8	West Bengal	03	85,983	8
9	Rajasthan	01	76,237	9
10	Orissa	13	68,745	10
11	Uttaranchal	02	47,288	11
12	Karnataka	02	45,899	12
13	Kerala	05	20,186	13
14	Bihar	09	10,873	14
15	Uttar Pradesh	02	5,365	15
16	Manipur	01	1,225	16
17	Andaman & Nicobar	05	816	17
	Total	87	27,68,322*	

## Annexure - 2

PVTGs With Less than 1000 Population (2001 Census)		
Sl. No.	PVTGs	Population
1	Birjia (Bihar)	17
2	Sentinelests	39
3	Great Andamanese	43
4	Onge	96
5	Birhor (Madhya Pradesh)	143
6	Asur (Bihar)	181
7	Mankidias (Orissa)	205
8	Jarawa	240
9	Cholanaicken (Kerala)	326
10	Shompen	398
11	Birhor (Bihar)	406
12	Savar (Bihar)	420
13	Raji (Uttaranchal)	517
14	Sauria Paharia (Bihar)	585
15	Birhor (Orissa)	702
16	Korwa (Bihar)	703
17	Todas (Tamil Nadu)	875
18	Kota (Tamil Nadu)	925
19	Raji (Uttar Pradesh)	998
	Total	7819

## Annexure- 3

PVTGs With More than 50,000 Population (2001 Census)		
Sl.No	PVTGs	Population
1	Konda Reddis (Andhra Pradesh)	83,096
2	Dongaria Khond (Andhra Pradesh)	85,324
3	Saharia (Rajasthan)	76,237
4	Lodha (West Bengal)	84,966
	Total	3,29,623

## Annexure- 4

PVTGs With More than One Lakh Population (2001 Census)		
Sl.No	PVTGs	Population
1	Saharias are both in Madhya Pradesh & Chattisgarh	4,50,217
2	Baigas in Madhya Pradesh / Chattisgarh	3,32,936
3	Katkarias/Kathodis) in Maharashtra	2,35,022
4	Kolam in Maharashtra	1,73,646
5	Riang (Tripura)	1,65,103
6	Hill Kharia (Jharkhand)	1,64,022
7	Irulas in Tamil Nadu	1,55,606
8	Mal Paharia (Jharkhand)	1,15,093
	Total	17,91,645



## National Advisory Council

### Development Challenges Specific to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

#### Executive Summary of the Recommendations

i Tribal communities live in about 15% of the country's landmass in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains to forests, hills and inaccessible areas. They encompass a wide diversity of cultures, systems of self-governance and livelihood practices and are provided special protection under Schedules V and VI of the Constitution. While some tribal communities have adopted a modern, mainstream way of life there are tribal groups characterized by (a) forest-based livelihoods, (b) pre-agriculture level of existence, (c) stagnant or declining population (d) extremely low literacy and (e) a subsistence economy. Such tribal groups, 75 in number, residing in 17 States and 1 Union Territory have been identified and categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups).

ii Each of the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) is small in number, culturally different from one another and lives in remote habitats with poor administrative and infrastructure. The PVTGs are becoming increasingly vulnerable due to loss of their customary habitats and the livelihood resources which sustained them.

iii The NAC recommendations are classified into four broad categories :

#### (I) Identification of PVTGs and Assessment of their Vulnerabilities

**Recommendation 1 :** Ministry of Tribal Affairs to facilitate specially designed Census for the PVTGs which should cover, in addition to their enumeration, their status of health, education, and housing.

**Recommendation 2 :** Prepare vulnerability indices of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

#### (II) Recognition of Rights of PVTGs, Development Approaches and Livelihood Strategies

**Recommendation 3 :** Generate awareness about the vulnerabilities of the PVTGs and the need to respect, protect and recognize their rights, especially to their land and customary habitats.

**Recommendation 4 :** Monitor rigorously the status of implementation of Forest Rights Act and PESA vis-à-vis PVTGs in various States so that the progress on how different States have recognized land/habitat rights of PVTGs can be tracked.

**Recommendation 5 :** Undertake an assessment of the status of PVTGs who have been displaced with or without compensation/rehabilitation and devise support mechanisms for ensuring their livelihoods.

**Recommendation 6:** Develop livelihood strategies and design development programmes for the PVTGs that are rights-based, factor in the felt-needs of the community, take into consideration their special vulnerabilities and empower them to negotiate their livelihood concerns.

**(III) Institutions for Governance and Service Delivery**

**Recommendation 7 :** Institutionalize participatory process within existing structures and programmes, placing PVTGs at high priority.

**Recommendation 8 :** Evolve effective service delivery mechanisms, working with the PVTGs to enable them to choose their development priorities on their own terms.

**(IV) Health, Nutrition and Education**

**Recommendation 9 :** Control factors – relating to health and nutrition – that contribute to decline in population of PVTGs.

**Recommendation 10 :** Launch a special drive to improve the educational status of the PVTGs.

In order to ensure effective implementation in the field, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in consultation with State Governments, concerned Departments and stakeholders need to draw up an Action Plan to operationalize the above mentioned recommendations in a time bound manner.