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SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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TRIBES IN INDIA - AN OVERVIEW

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Introduction

A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor. A tribe is viewed, developmentally or economic, historically, as a social group existing outside of or before the development of state. A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient, and not integrated into the national society. It is perhaps the term most readily understood and used by the general public to describe such communities.

The distinction between tribal and indigenous is important because tribal peoples have a special status acknowledged in international law. They often face particular issues in addition to those faced by the wider category of indigenous peoples. Many people use the term "tribal society" to refer to societies organized largely on the basis of social, especially families, descent groups. A customary tribe in these terms is face-to-face community, relatively bound by kinship relation, reciprocal exchange, and strong ties to place. In some place, such as India and North America, tribes are polities that have been granted legal recognition and limited autonomy by the national states.

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