

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

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PRESS NOTE

Voting by tribal communities blossoms as ECI's outreach to them bears fruit

ECI's efforts over last two years brings PVTG Communities & tribals into electoral process in a big way

ECI's efforts, over last two years, for inclusion of PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) communities and other tribal groups in the electoral process have borne fruit with scenes of tribal groups in various States/UTs participating enthusiastically in phase 1 and phase 2 of the GE 2024 at polling stations. In a historic move, the Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar voted for the first time in a General Election.

The Election Commission of India being conscious of PVTGs inclusion in the electoral process had made special efforts in the last two years for their enrolment as voters and also participation in the voting process. During the special summary revision for updation of electoral rolls, special outreach camps were held across the specific states where PVTGs reside for inclusion in the electoral roll. It may be recalled that during the press conference at Pune in November 2022, on the occasion of national level launch of Special Summary Revision 2023, CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar had emphasised on Commission's focussed outreach & interventions to enrol and empower PVTGs as country's proud voters.



PVTG- Baiga tribe from MP and Shompen tribe from great Nicobar

Snapshots from certain States

Madhya Pradesh

There are a total three PVTGs in the state namely Baiga, Bhariya and Sahariya. Out of a total population of 9,91,613 in 23 districts, 6,37,681 are eligible 18+ citizens and all are registered in the electoral rolls. In two phases of voting in the state, there was a lot of enthusiasm among the voters of Baiga and Bharia tribes who reached the polling station early in the morning, waited for their turn to vote and ensured their participation in the great festival of democracy.



Tribal theme-based polling stations were also set to welcome tribal groups at the polling stations, with villagers in Dindori, MP decorated the polling stations themselves.



Polling station in Dindori, MP

Karnataka

The western and southern regions of Karnataka are home to the PVTGs Jenu Kuruba and Koraga. Prior to the general elections, the office of CEO Karnataka in association with social and tribal welfare departments ensured 100% enrollment of eligible PVTGs. District and AC level tribal welfare committees were formed, which met regularly to ensure enrolment of all and to create electoral awareness amongst all PVTGs. Election Officials have visited these areas to enhance registration and electoral participation. There are 55,815 PVTGs in the entire population, out of them 18+ are 39,498 and all are registered in the electoral rolls

40 polling stations are established in unique tribal themes in an effort to draw these voters to the polls on election day.





Kerala

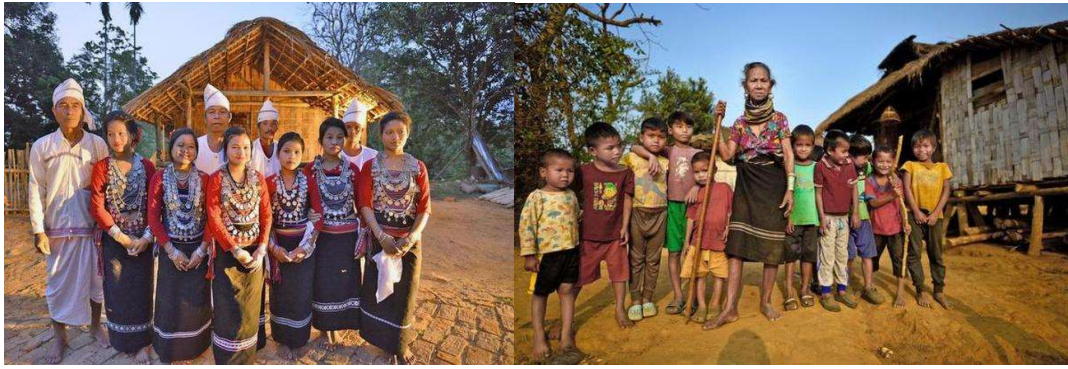
In Kerala, five communities are classified as PVTGs. They are Koraga of Kasaragod District, Cholanaikayan of Nilambur valley, Malappuram district, Kurumbar of Attappady, Palakkad District, Kadar of Parambikulam, Palakkad and Thrissur districts, Kattunaykan of Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Palakkad districts. They have a total population of 4750 as of March 31, 2024, with 3850 of them successfully enrolled in the electoral rolls through special campaigns and registration camps. Provision for transportation on polling day was ensured alongside intensive voter awareness initiatives facilitated by Electoral Literacy Clubs and Chunav Pathashalas.

An inspiring feat was achieved by the Kurumba tribal voters who walked for hours to reach an accessible forest area where vehicles were provided to facilitate their transportation to polling booths in Mukkali region of Silent Valley, Kerala. Many tribal voters aged 80 and 90 years exemplified a commitment to democracy and an inspiration to many. Among the 817 voters, 417 were female.



Tripura

Reang is one of the tribal groups in Tripura exhibiting a stand-alone spirit. They make up a large number of the State's Assembly Constituencies residing in different places of remote and hilly areas such as Dhalai, North, Gomati and South Tripura Districts. The Bru community, also known as the Reang Community, migrated to the state of Tripura from the state of Mizoram and are now living in several government-provided resettlement sites.



Odisha

Odisha is home to 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) namely Paudi Bhuiya, Juang, Saura, Lanjia Saura, Mankirdia, Birhore, Kutia Kondha, Bondo, Didayi, Lodha, Kharia, Chukutia Bhunjia, Dongoria Khond with a total population of 2,64,974.

With significant efforts and registration drives, 100 % enrollment of all 1,84,274 eligible PVTGs have been achieved. Awareness activities were conducted periodically on the importance of electoral participation and voter education content was created in the local dialects. Alongside special registration drives, a multifaceted approach incorporating traditional folk arts and community engagement has been instrumental in ensuring 100% PVTG enrolment. Street plays performed in local languages, along with cultural forms like Pala and Daskathia, have served as powerful media for voter education and awareness.



Mobile demonstration vehicles were deployed in PVTG areas to educate communities about the electoral process and over 20,000 PVTGs participated in mock polls to familiarise them with the voting process. The novel idea of having wall paintings in local dialects not only added aesthetics to the surroundings but also called out empowering messages like "vote for sure" and "my vote can't be purchased."



Voters of the Paudi Bhuyan Tribes (PVTG) in Odisha put up culturally inspired events being empowered by the efforts of officials of Bonai district.



666 theme-based polling booths are set up in their areas, removing logistical barriers and ensuring voting process within their reach. Polling is scheduled in the state in coming phases (phase 4-7).



Bihar

In Bihar, five PVTGs, including Mal Pahariya, Sauria Paharia, Pahariya, Korwa, and Birhor, constitute a population of 7631 across ten districts. With a remarkable 100% enrollment of eligible 3147 electors, an extensive campaign including 'Matdaata appeal patra' was launched to enhance their participation in ongoing elections.



Jharkhand

Jharkhand has 32 tribal groups with 9 of them belonging to PVTGs namely Asur, Birhor, Birjia, Korwa, Mal Paharia, Pahariya, Sauria Paharia, Baiga and Savar. During SSR 2024, special campaigns were conducted in the habitat areas of PVTGs in Jharkhand which are mostly hilly areas, resulting in 6,979 enrolments, with a total of all 1,69,288 eligible 18+ PVTGs now registered in the electoral roll. Total PVTG population stands at 2,58,266.





Gujarat

Kolgha, Kathodi, Kotwalia, Padhar, Siddi are the tribal groups belonging to the PVTGs in 15 districts of Gujarat. A total of 86,755 are registered in the electoral roll ensuring 100% registration of eligible PVTGs in the state. Gujarat is going for polls in third phase of General Elections 2024.



Tamil Nadu

In Tamil Nadu, there are six PVTGs, namely Kuttunayakan, Kota, Kurumba, Irular, Paniyan, Toda with a total population of 2,26,300. Out of 1,62,049 18+ eligible PVTGs, 1,61,932 are registered electors. A comprehensive campaign spanning 23 districts has prioritised PVTG inclusion, with significant focus on regions like Coimbatore, Nilgiris, and Tirupathur.

Enthusiastic voters reached the polling station through various modes like walking through dense forest, waterways etc., and ensured their participation in the Lok Sabha elections.



39-Tirunelveli Lok Sabha Constituency, Tribal voters registered their votes on 19.04.2024 at the polling center set up at Tirunelveli Assembly Constituency Pettai



Chhattisgarh

With a combined population of 1,86,918, five PVTGs are found in Chhattisgarh namely Abujhmadia, Baiga, Birhor, Kamaar, and Pahadi Korwa spread across 18 districts. The number of 18+ voters stand at 1,20,632 and all have been registered in the electoral rolls.

Many steps have been taken to increase their electoral participation, including voter education campaigns in Gariaband, the deployment of additional vehicles in Kanker and establishment of eco-friendly polling stations in Kabirdham District under the Baiga tribal theme and using plastic free natural material like bamboo, flowers, leaves for decoration as a step towards sustainable elections.

In a remarkable feat, 100% epic card distribution was ensured and “Chunai Madai” festival celebrations in Mahasamund district helped establish a connect with the tribes.



Eco Friendly Polling Station in Kabirdham District of Rajnandgaon PC.



Mahasamund PC - Kulhadighat Village, Dist Gariaband - Kamar PVTG



Background

India has 8.6% tribal population which includes 75 groups of Tribals which are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG). Location of new Polling booths in previously inaccessible areas has led to the large-scale inclusion of PVTGs. In the elections to the last 11 state legislative assemblies, there were around 9 lakh eligible voters from 14 PVTG communities namely Kamar, Bhunjia, Baiga, Pahadi Korwa,

Abujhmadia, Birhor, Sahariya, Bhariya, Chenchu, Kolam, Thoti, Kondareddy, Jenu Kuruba & Koraga. The Commission's special efforts ensured 100% enrolment of PVTGs in those states.



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