

# Administration in Tribal Areas

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# TRIBAL HISTORY — WHO THEY ARE AND WHY IT MATTERS

**Rich, diverse cultures:** Telangana is home to ~32 Scheduled Tribe communities — Gonds, Koyas, Konda Reddis, Lambadas, Chenchus, Kolams, Naikpods among the major groups; each with a distinct dialect, cosmology, and ecological knowledge that no university teaches

**Isolation and richness:** Elaborate jataras (Sammakka-Sarakka at Medaram draws 1 crore+ pilgrims — Asia's largest tribal fair), oral epics, tattoo traditions, forest-based healing systems — a living civilisation, not a museum exhibit

**Historical struggle:** Cyclical famines, epidemic diseases (malaria, smallpox), and conflict with encroaching non-tribal communities steadily eroded the tribal resource base over centuries

**Colonial dispossession:** British forest reservation extinguished traditional usufruct rights; zamindari system enslaved tribal labour on their own forest lands; surveys redrew boundaries to tribal disadvantage

**Haimendorf's lens:** Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf lived among the Gonds and Naikpods of Adilabad in the 1940s–50s; his "Tribes of India-the struggle for survival" documents the richness and the fragility of tribal life — essential reading before any field posting

**The paradox we inherit:** Resource-rich lands, resource-poor people — Coal, forests, rivers generate revenue while communities nearby need roads and schools

**The administrator's role:** Enable tribes to harness new opportunities while protecting what is precious — be an enabler and a shield, not merely a scheme-delivery mechanism

# CONSTITUTIONAL & STATUTORY PROVISIONS

**Constitutional framework:** Articles 244 & 244A (5th & 6th Schedules), Arts. 330–342 (reservations, ST definition); the 5th Schedule empowers the Governor to modify or annul any central or state law for Scheduled Areas — a rarely invoked but powerful instrument

**Scheduled Areas in Telangana:** Parts of Adilabad, Komaram Bheem, Mulugu, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Bhadradri Kothagudem districts — notified under the Scheduled Areas (Part A States) Order, 1950; every administrator must know the precise boundaries of the Scheduled Area in their jurisdiction

**Tribes Advisory Council (TAC):** Statutory advisory body to the Governor, chaired by the Chief Minister; policy discussions at highest level

**Representation & financial provisions:** Reserved constituencies; STSDF (ST Sub-plan/Development Fund) mandates proportionate allocation-need to monitor and pursue timely proper utilization; Article 275 funds also require same persuasion

**NCST & State ST Commission:** Oversight bodies with suo motu investigative powers; a referral from NCST can escalate a local administrative lapse into a major accountability issue — take their notices seriously and respond on time

**SC/ST Atrocities Act (1989, amended 2018):** Special courts, mandatory FIR registration, time-bound trial; the 2018 amendment strengthened provisions after a Supreme Court ruling diluted them; low conviction rate reflects quality of investigation/field reality, not absence of crime

**PESA Act 1996:** Extends self-governance to Scheduled Area gram sabhas with powers over land alienation, minor minerals, NTFP and money-lending regulation; frequently bypassed by contractors and local officials — enforcing PESA in letter and spirit is a primary administrative obligation

# LAND LAWS — PROTECTING THE FOUNDATION

**Act 1/70 — the cornerstone:** AP Scheduled Areas Land Transfer Regulation (1 of 1959, amended 1970) makes any transfer of tribal land to non-tribals void ab initio; even benami transactions and collusive arrangements are covered; the Collector/ITDA PO as Agent to Government can initiate suo motu restoration

**Form-K & Form-L:** Form-K is the primary land record for tribal holdings; Form-L registers lands already alienated under the Regulation — need awareness

**Agent to Government Court:** The Collector in tribal areas exercises quasi-judicial powers to hear and decide land alienation cases; this combines speed with accessibility — use it proactively

**Mobile courts — justice at the doorstep**

**Forest-revenue boundary disputes:** Thousands of tribal cultivation claims are stuck between revenue and forest records; the GIS forest layer, forest gazette notifications, and old Working Plans (which often map habitation boundaries) are crucial tools — triangulate all three before deciding

**RoFR pattas without support services:** Over 2.5 lakh individual forest rights pattas distributed in Telangana; without convergence of Revenue, Forest and TW departments, many patta holders still face harassment from forest officials — a patta unaccompanied by departmental coordination is an incomplete victory

**SARFAESI conflict:** Tribal land under Agency laws cannot be mortgaged to commercial banks; tribals are thus excluded from institutional credit; ITDA-backed credit guarantee schemes and DCCB linkages are workarounds an imaginative administrator can deploy

**Ground reality — non-tribal occupation:** Non-tribal cultivation of tribal land (often using tribal names in records) is widespread; political protection complicates eviction; an administrator must document, build cases, and persist through resistance

# FOREST LAWS — RIGHTS, RESOURCES AND REGULATION

**Forest Rights Act 2006 — recognition, not grant:** FRA vests pre-existing rights of STs and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) — both Individual Forest Rights (IFR) and Community Forest Rights (CFR); the state is not “giving” rights but acknowledging those that always existed

**Community Forest Rights (CFR) — the untapped potential:** CFR places forest governance in gram sabha hands; there are villages in Telangana that earn in crores selling bamboo under CFR, needs proper communication and coordination between community and forest officers

**MoTA clarifications — know them:** 2012 and 2019 MoTA circulars clarify that SHGs harvesting bamboo from their CFR area need no transit permit; many officers are unaware — proactively brief forest officers and prevent unnecessary prosecutions of tribal harvesters

**Parivesh portal and forest diversion:** All major projects requiring forest land diversion (roads, irrigation, power) need Stage I and II clearances; Gram Sabha consent is mandatory and must be genuinely obtained — not a pre-printed resolution signed after the meeting; this is a legal requirement, not a formality

**NTFP and GCC:** GCC (Girijan Co-operative Corporation) holds monopoly procurement rights over key NTFP (tamarind, adda leaves, mahua, honey, lac); — monitor GCC procurement cycle rigorously every season and encourage communities to go beyond by processing

**Bamboo amendment 2017:** Bamboo removed from the definition of “tree” outside forest areas — eliminating the need for transit permits on tribal/private lands; this opens the door for bamboo enterprise but forest field staff often still demand permits; sensitise them

# HEALTH — ACCESS, AWARENESS AND ACTION

**Access is the primary challenge:** Hamlets across Bhadradri Kothagudem and Mulugu become cut off for weeks in monsoon; mobile health units must pre-position medicines and have a contingency river-crossing plan; the tribal disease calendar follows the rains — plan health logistics accordingly

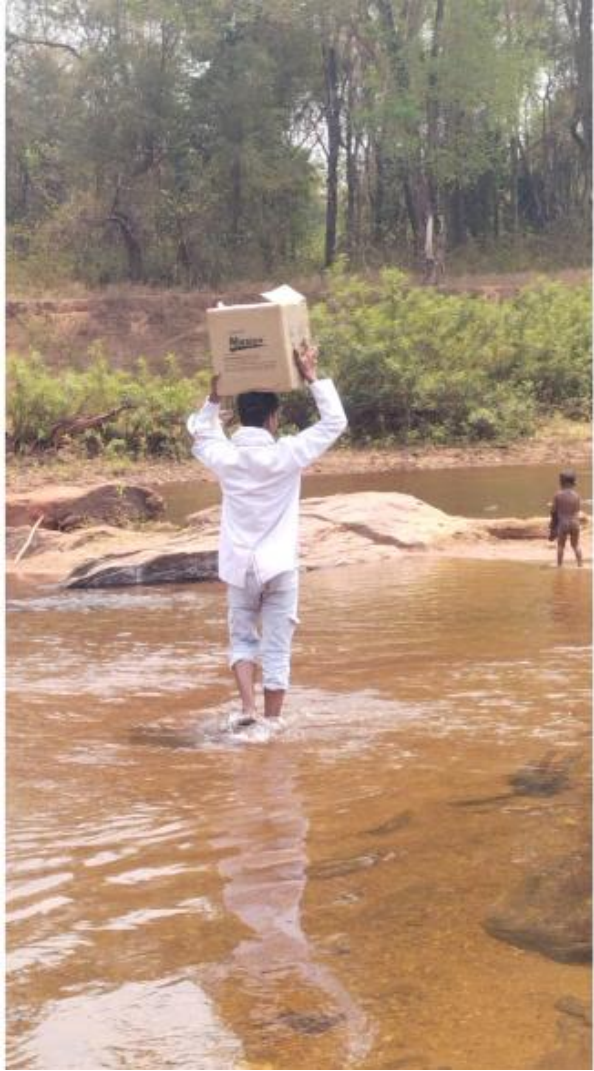
**Infectious disease burden:** Falciparum malaria (the more severe form) peaks post-monsoon; TB is endemic with DOTS centres stretched thin; typhoid and water-borne diseases spike when streams flood — review case-load data monthly, not just at quarterly reviews

**Intergenerational anemia:** Tribal women's shift away from iron-rich forest foods (adda flowers, tubers, jungle greens) to polished-rice diets has deepened anemia;— culturally sensitive nutrition counselling(moringa, mahua syrup, nuvvulu, bellam) is more effective than distributed iron tablets alone

**Sickle Cell & Thalassemia — test, track, treat:** Genetically prevalent among Gond, Koya, and Banjara communities; Telangana runs mass screening programs — the real gap is pre-marital counselling for carrier couples and tagging with blood donors

**Traditional healers — bridge, don't bypass:** Dismissing village vaidyas and bhagats creates a trust vacuum;— co-opt rather than compete

**NCDs — the emerging challenge:** Alcohol dependence, tobacco use, and dietary transition are generating hypertension, diabetes, and liver disease even in remote tribal communities; PHCs must shift from purely infectious-disease focus to integrated chronic disease management







Best equipment, incentive remuneration for doctors and specialists, motivation and support to the officers and staff  
CSR support from BDL, BEL, ECIL, PFC, REC, ONGC, HPCL, BPCL and so on – with focus on health sector and saturation approach

# EDUCATION — BRIDGING THE GAP

**Language — the first barrier:** A Gondi-speaking child enters a Telugu-medium classroom — comprehension collapses by Grade 3; mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the first 2 years reduces dropout significantly; even learning 15–20 Gondi words helps a teacher build immediate trust

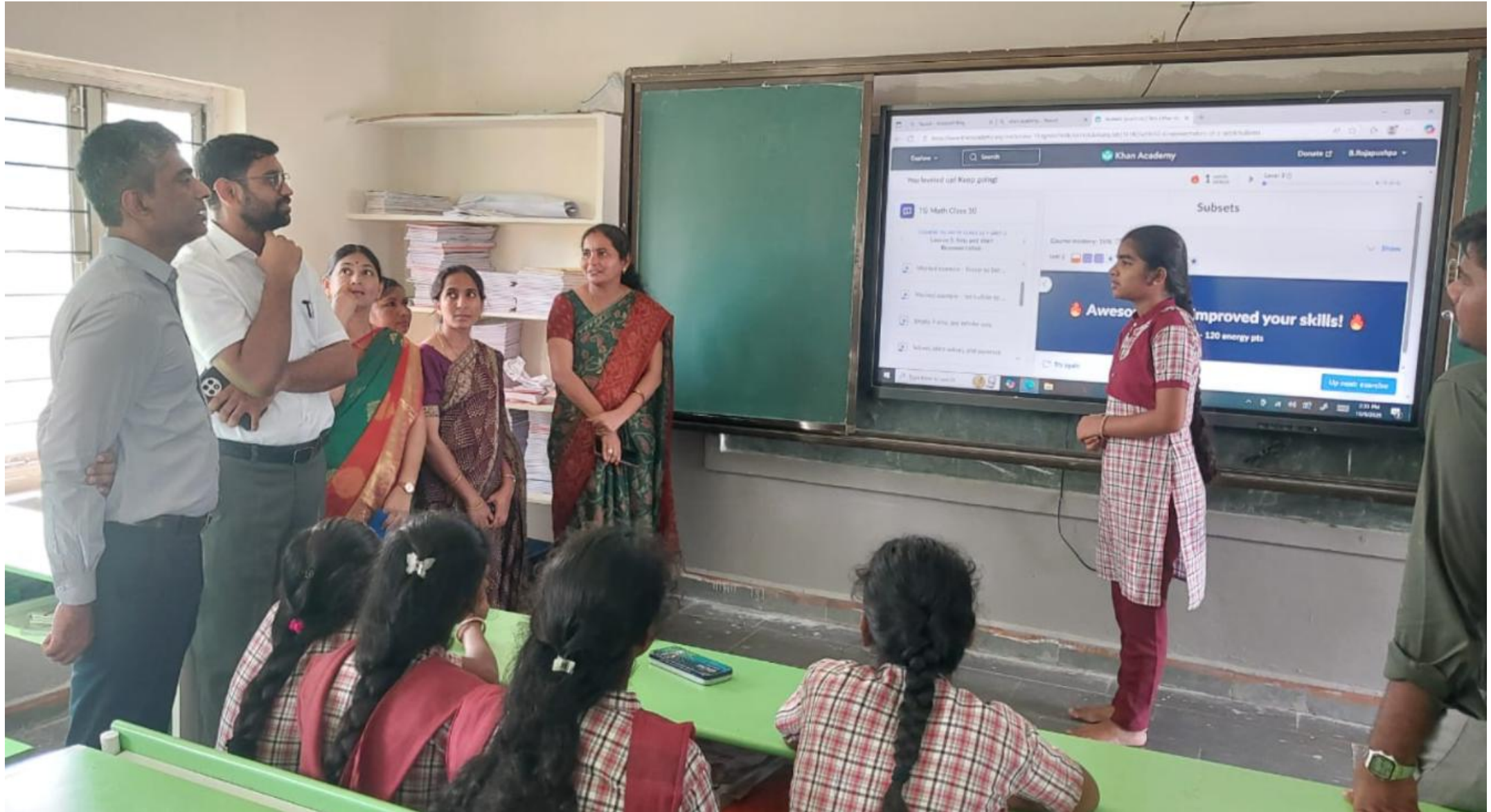
**TTWREIS — the residential model works:** Telangana's Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society runs 500+ residential schools (Gurukuls) — addressing access, nutrition, and supervision simultaneously; these schools have produced IAS officers, doctors, and engineers from tribal families

**Teacher presence — the Achilles heel:** Absenteeism in remote postings is the single biggest supply-side failure; need to motivate, support and monitor strictly and also recognize whenever there is occasion

**Pedagogy that connects:** contextualised learning is not a luxury, it is the only approach that works in tribal schools

**Higher education pathways:** TTWRDC (Tribal Welfare Residential Degree Colleges) and Ekalavya Model Residential Schools are building pipelines;— end-to-end tracking must be done

**Linking education to a visible future:** A tribal student from Cherla who sees no prospect after graduation loses motivation mid-way; mentorship by successful tribal alumni (visiting speakers, role model programs) is more inspiring than any scheme brochure — arrange these visits deliberately



KGBV schools given computers for labs on saturation mode using CSR amounts from banks







Medicinal herbs planted in all Govt schools – Tulasi, Ranapala, Kalabanda, Nela usiri, Nimma gaddi, Insulin plant

Sediment and activated charcoal water filters placed in schools for drinking water



# SKILLING AND LIVELIHOOD — BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

**Convergence over silos:** ITI trades, DDU-GKY, PMKVY, and NSTS schemes often operate independently; ITDA must act as convergence coordinator — matching training to actual local employment potential, not just filling enrollment targets

**Root skilling in traditional knowledge:** The best skilling is an upgrade of what tribals already know — a Koya woman who harvests honey from cliff-face hives is already a skilled apiculturist; formalise the skill with safer equipment, quality certification, and a market linkage

**Agriculture and allied activities:** Paddy-fish-poultry integration, vegetable cultivation, sericulture, horticulture; NTFP cultivation of amla, stevia, and medicinal herbs on homestead lands offers income with low capital — link patta holders to KCC, and soil health cards


**NTFP enterprise — value addition is the key:** Tamarind, adda leaves (for leaf plates), mahua, lac, honey, and forest gum are commercially viable; SHG-level processing (drying, packaging, branding) can double farm-gate prices; GCC needs value-addition centres at habitation level, not just depot-level procurement


**Cultural tourism — tribals as stakeholders, not spectators:** Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara draws 1 crore+ visitors; eco-cultural trails in Eturnagaram and Papikondalu can generate significant income if tribals own the enterprise — culture-food-song-nature trails, not resort-and-safari models

**Artifacts and handicrafts with a story:** Gond painting, Lambadi embroidery, bamboo basketry have strong urban markets; GI tagging must be paired with market development — tag without market access is just a certificate

**Future-ready skills:** Drone technician, CCTV installer, logistics coordinator, precision agriculture operator — realistic aspirations for tribals with Grade 10 education; pilot programs show that the tribal youth adapts quickly to technology when training is contextualised




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Tribal Museum  
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**Special Performance**

By Parampara Foundation depicting Ramayana themed dance and performances by Tribal troupes.

9 Jan, 2025 5 PM - 7 PM Bhadrachalam Ghat

**Craft and Food Stalls**

Find Traditional Tribal food like Ippa Puvvu (Mahua flower), Karakkaya (Myrobalan), Wild and flavoured honey and Bamboo Craft.

9 - 11 Jan, 2025 9 AM - 7 PM Bhadrachalam Ghat

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Padava and Motor boat rides at Bhadrachalam Godavari Ghat.

9 - 11 Jan, 2025 9 AM - 7 PM Bhadrachalam Ghat

**Cultural Performances**

Local and Traditional artists will be a highlight to showcase the talent of the Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

9 - 11 Jan, 2025 5 PM - 7 PM Bhadrachalam Ghat

**Tribal experience**

Visit the Museum premises to view the amazing wisdom of tribal culture, including their rituals, dress and jewellery, hunting equipment etc.

9 - 11 Jan, 2025 9 AM - 5 PM ITDA Tribal Museum

**Wildlife experience**

Kinnersani Deer Park and Environment Education Center, Canal Coracle Ride, Dam Boating between untouched lush green islands.

9 - 11 Jan, 2025 7 AM - 5 PM Kinnersani Wildlife Sanctuary





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-  **Bhadrachalam Ghat**  
Yeru - The River Festival
-  **ITDA Tribal Museum**
-  **Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary**

Map details:  
 Kinnerasani to Bhadrachalam Ghat: 41.1 km, 53 min  
 Kinnerasani to Kinakagiri Trek: 70.5 km, 1 hr 40 min  
 Bhadrachalam Ghat to Bojiguppa Tribal Village: 18 km, 27 min  
 Bhadrachalam Ghat to ITDA Tribal Museum: 70.5 km, 1 hr 40 min




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# FOREST TRIBAL LIVELIHOOD PROTECTION

**Habitation-level planning — the unit of change:** Begin with basic data— persons, land type, livestock, forest dependence, income sources; without granular data, basic entitlements; link each household to at least two livelihood streams

**Intensify within 0.25–0.5 km radius:** MGNREGS-funded farm ponds, fish tanks, poultry units, goat sheds, kitchen gardens, and agri-processing sheds can generate Rs. 40,000–60,000 additional income per household annually with proper convergence — all achievable without displacing anyone from the forest

**VSS-led community forest governance (0.5–2 km):** Vana Samrakshan Samitis (JFM committees) must govern the community's forest interface — controlling encroachment, managing NTFP harvesting seasons, and preventing overgrazing; a functional VSS is more valuable than any single scheme

**Bamboo community groves — the long bet:** A one-acre bamboo grove takes 3 years to yield but then produces income for 50+ years; ITDA-supported planting on community lands in Bhadradi is demonstrating this model

**RoFR patta holders — activate entitlements:** Link each patta to soil health card, KCC (via DCCB), solarised pump sets, and crop insurance — a patta without support services is a piece of paper; convergence by the ITDA PO is what converts paper into prosperity

**Landless tribals — no one left behind:** Those with homestead space take up poultry/cattle; those with no assets link to MGNREGS for immediate income and DDU-GKY for skilling toward urban employment; those with RoFR land focus on agriculture and horticulture

**Participatory planning works:** Community comes together to plan the works and activities



# APPROACH IN ADMINISTRATION — PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICE

**Understand the layers:** Tribes, within tribes, among tribes, with non-tribes — every community has internal hierarchies, factions and inter-community tensions; an officer who treats “tribals” as homogeneous will make costly errors

**Natural justice as a non-negotiable:** In the Agent to Government court or any administrative hearing, give every claimant time to be heard even when the legal position seems clear; the experience of being heard fairly builds state legitimacy more durably than any scheme

**Go beyond the scope of the job:** An officer who reads a bamboo transit-permit exemption circular and proactively briefs VSS committees has changed livelihoods without spending a rupee; your initiative and imagination are public resources — use them generously

**Engage NGOs — they are allies:** Organisations like AWARE, SAKTI, and Integrated Village Development Project have 20+ years of community trust; leverage their field presence and institutional memory; an adversarial relationship with credible civil society is a strategic mistake

**Integrity in promises:** Never assure what you cannot deliver; in tribal communities, broken official promises leave scars that outlast tenures; if a scheme is delayed, communicate honestly — communities understand constraints far better than officials assume, but they will never forgive being misled

**Language and distance — reduce every barrier:** Learn 15–20 key phrases in Gondi, Koya, or Lambadi as appropriate to your posting; walk to remote villages on field visits; the act of walking to a hamlet communicates more respect than any scheme announcement at a camp

**Vigilance against exploitation:** Moneylenders charging 10% monthly, NTFP middlemen paying below-MSP prices — these networks survive because officials look away; active surveillance and enforcement is a constitutional duty, not optional initiative









# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR TRIBAL WELFARE

**Tribal Welfare Department:** Nodal department overseeing all ST welfare programs;— under-utilisation is as harmful as non-allocation; track monthly expenditure

**ITDA — the pivotal institution:** Headed by Project Officer (Sub-Collector/Deputy Collector rank); functions as a mini-government combining executive, quasi-judicial (Agent to Govt.) and welfare roles

**GCC — market intervention arm:** Girijan Co-operative Corporation procures NTFP at MSP and runs fair-price shops; GCC performance must be treated as a livelihood barometer

**Convergence — the core challenge:** Revenue, Forest, Panchayat Raj, Agriculture, Health, Education all operate in tribal areas with their own silos; the ITDA PO must act as the convergence hub — coordinating, not controlling; hold monthly inter-departmental reviews in the field, not just at the collectorate

Build institutions around community – so that the initiatives have continuity

# WOMEN IN TRIBAL SOCIETY — PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY

**Significant traditional agency:** Tribal women in Telangana lead NTFP collection, manage homestead finances, and make key household decisions; gender hierarchies are less rigid than in plains communities —an asset to be built upon

**Guardians of traditional ecological knowledge:** Koya and Gond women possess encyclopaedic knowledge of edible plants, medicinal herbs, and forest ecology; this knowledge is rapidly eroding as forests shrink and younger generations migrate to cities — it must be documented before it is lost

**Trafficking :** girls are particularly vulnerable to false employment offers; trafficking networks operate through contractors often known to the family; track suspicious migration patterns at mandal level with inter-district alerts

**Early marriage — track, don't just legislate:** Despite PCMA 2006, child marriages remain common in remote areas; proactive prevention through anganwadi and ASHA networks works far better than post-facto intervention

**SHGs as agency builders:** SHGs are capable of building enterprises of lakhs and crores — government's role is initial credit linkage and market connection

**Role model effect — representation as development strategy:** Recognise and encourage good work by women in field level so that they replicate and the ideas grown

# BEFORE YOU SPEAK, LISTEN !

Before you go to a village to give speeches on better ways to live, earn, and which schemes are beneficial for tribal communities — listen to them first.

Listen to the woman who sings a lullaby for her child — she has kept life going through droughts and floods

The bell on the neck of cattle, the rustling grass as the breeze passes, the chirp of birds at dusk — these are the sounds of a life in calibration with nature

The stream flowing over boulders, deer crossing it at dawn, gaur fighting for territory in the sal forest — a world that existed long before our files were created

Women gathering mahua flowers before sunrise, farmers ploughing with bullocks, communities singing while planting — these are not poverty indicators; they are expressions of civilisation

*Tribals have observed the game played by nature for thousands of years. They have learnt that life is ephemeral and best lived in the present, fully. To think they are naive is our foolishness. Their innocence is sacred and when you hold their hands with pure affection, their trust is absolute.*



Thanks