

Understanding Marginalisation | Easy Notes | Class 8th

Introduction:

Have you ever felt 'left out' in class just because you were a little different from others? That feeling is called marginalisation, when a person or group is pushed to the 'side' and not treated equally. In this chapter, we will understand why some communities face exclusion in society and how it affects their lives and opportunities.

Just like we sometimes feel left out in school for being different, some communities in India also feel pushed to the side in society. One such community is the Adivasis. So, let's first understand who they are.

Who are Adivasis?

- **Adivasi** means 'original inhabitants' of India.
- They lived, and many still live, **close to forests** and depend on nature for living.
- Adivasis form about **8% of India's population** (8 out of 100 people)
- Moreover, India has **500+ different Adivasi communities**.
- Many Adivasi areas are rich in **minerals and forests**.
 - **Note:** *Because Adivasis live in resource-rich areas, they often face displacement.*
 - *For example, big industrial and mining centres have been built in Adivasi regions like Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Bhilai.*

Where do Adivasis live?

- Adivasis are found in states like **Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal**.
- Many Adivasi groups also live in the **North-Eastern states** like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- **Odisha** has more than **60 tribal groups**, showing great diversity.

Remember: Just like different states have different cultures, different tribal groups also have their own traditions and ways of life.

Adivasi Society

- Adivasi societies usually have **very little hierarchy**, so people are treated more equally.
- This is different from caste-based societies based on **jati-varna**.
- Their society is also different from those ruled by kings and strict rulers.
 - **For Example:** In many Adivasi villages, people take decisions together and share work, instead of following strict 'high' and 'low' divisions.

Adivasi Beliefs

- Adivasis worship **ancestors, village spirits, and nature spirits** like mountain and river spirits.
- Village spirits are usually worshipped in **sacred groves**, and ancestors are worshipped **at home**.
- They were also influenced by religions like **Shakta, Buddhist, Vaishnav, Bhakti and Christianity**.
- In the 19th century, many Adivasis converted to Christianity, which became important later.

Adivasi Languages

- Adivasis have their own **languages**, many of which are very old.
- These languages influenced Indian languages like **Bengali**.
- **Santhali** is one of the biggest Adivasi languages and is used in magazines and online publications.

Who are Scheduled Tribes?

- In government records, Adivasis are called **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**.
- There is an **official list** of Scheduled Tribes in India.
- STs are often written together with Scheduled Castes as **SC/ST**.

Adivasis and Stereotyping

- People often show Adivasis only in **colourful clothes and dances**.
- Many people do not try to know their real life and problems.
- This creates a wrong idea that Adivasis are **backward or primitive**.
- Additionally, such thinking leads to **discrimination and unfair behaviour**.

Adivasis and Development

- Forests give useful resources like **metals, timber, herbs, wax, lac, and honey**.
- Forests also help in keeping **air and water clean** and rivers alive.
- Earlier, Adivasis had strong knowledge and control over forest areas.
- Many rulers and empires depended on Adivasis for forest resources.

Adivasis and Displacement

- People clear forest land for **timber**, and to build **farms, industries, and mines**.
- Many Adivasis live in **mineral-rich areas**, so companies take their land for big projects.
- Powerful groups often join hands to **grab tribal land**, sometimes by force and without proper rules.
- Also, many Adivasi lands also went under water due to **big dams** built after Independence.
- Many tribal people earlier lived in forest areas that later became **national parks and wildlife sanctuaries**.

- **Note:** When Adivasis continue living in these forests, they are often called *encroachers*.

Effects on Adivasis

- In the past, Adivasis lived by **hunting, shifting farming, and forest work**.
- But later, forest laws and industries forced many Adivasis to leave their land.
- Today, many Adivasis work as labourers in **plantations, factories, construction sites, and homes**.
 - **For Example:** From the 1830s, plantation owners took many Adivasis to work in plantations, especially tea gardens in Assam.
 - They get very low wages there and this pushes them into a cycle of poverty and deprivation.
- Now, they have **less access and less control** over forests than before.
- Many Adivasis also **have to migrate** for work. This migration makes their lives very painful, and harsh conditions even kill many of them.
- The **education** of their children also **suffers**.
- Additionally, many tribal children become **malnourished**.
- Displacement not only takes away their livelihood sources, it also destroys **customs and traditions**.
- Lastly, Adivasis use thousands of forest plants for **food, medicines, fibres, and natural products**. When they lose forest rights, this entire knowledge system also gets destroyed.

Important to Note: Adivasis' economic life and social life are connected with each other. When they lose land and forests, they first lose their livelihood and food sources. So, they have to move to other places and search for other work to survive. Then their social life also gets affected because they get separated from their community, customs, and traditional way of living.

The Niyamgiri Hills Case

Niyamgiri Hills in Odisha is sacred for Dongarria Kond Adivasis. A company planned mining there, which could displace the community. The Adivasis protested strongly, and the matter reached the Supreme Court.

Other Communities:

Apart from **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**, communities like **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and some **OBC groups** also face marginalisation due to caste discrimination, poverty, and fewer opportunities. So, different groups can feel marginalised in different ways because they may have less power, respect, and access to resources.

Recent Legal Reform (2026) : To support students of disadvantaged and marginalised groups (SC, ST, OBC, minorities, girls, poor families, and PwD), the UGC asked universities and colleges to form an Equity Committee so that students get equal opportunity and do not face discrimination.

Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

What is minority?

A **minority** is a group that is **smaller in number** than others. (But minorities may also have less power and fewer opportunities.)

- The Constitution safeguards minorities by giving them rights like:
 - **Right to Equality** (no discrimination)
 - **Right to Freedom of Religion** (to follow and practise their religion)
 - **Cultural and Educational Rights** (to protect their language and culture, and run their own educational institutions)

Why do we need to safeguard minorities?

- Minorities are **less in number**, so others can easily ignore them.
- The **majority may dominate** their culture and language.
- Some people may **discriminate** against them unfairly.
- Safeguards help them get **equal opportunities** in education and life.
- These rights help them live with **equality, respect, and safety**.

Muslims and Marginalisation

- Muslims form about **14 out of 100 people** in India (2011 Census).
- Many Muslims are marginalised because they have **lower social and economic development** in many areas.
- Data shows problems in **basic facilities, literacy, and government jobs**.
- Some Muslims wear traditional attire (like burqa, long beard, or cap/fez), and this sometimes makes others see them as "different" and judge them quickly.
- This creates stereotypes and people may treat them unfairly.

Note: After 15 years, India will conduct the next Population Census. (it is expected to start in mid-2026).

This will help the government get updated data about different communities and plan better facilities, education, and jobs for everyone.

Sachar Committee (2005)

• The government formed a committee in 2005 to study the condition of Muslims.

• Justice Rajindar Sachar led this committee.

• It studied the social, economic, and educational status of Muslims.

• The report said Muslims were lagging behind in many areas, similar to SCs and STs

• Muslim children (age 7-16) had lower years of schooling than many other communities.

• The committee also found that many people believe Muslims mostly send their children to Madarasas, but this is a myth.

Conclusion: Marginalisation happens when people or communities get pushed aside and do not get equal respect, rights, and opportunities. It can happen due to poverty, caste, tribe, religion, language, or skin colour. We must follow equality and humanity so that every group can live safely and grow in society.

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