

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 5296
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.04.2025

COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION AS TRIBE

5296. Shri Selvaganapathi T.M.:

Will the Minister of Tribal Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the top anthropologists have demanded a paradigm shift in the way India defines a tribe and also demanded that a community's classification should be assessed on a spectrum of tribalness rather than the binary question of being tribe or not and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether a broad consensus reached at a recent Indian Anthropology Congress where the leadership of the Anthropological Survey of India and officials from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes participated and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the criteria used by the Government to classify communities as Scheduled Tribes are the ones set by the Lokur Committee in 1965 and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether it is true that hundreds of other communities have sought to be added to the Scheduled Tribes list and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a): A round table discussion on "Developing a scale to distinguish Tribal population from caste based and Mainstream communities" which was of academic nature was held on 23.2.2025 as part of Indian Anthropology Congress 2025 organized by Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture from 21st to 23rd February 2025 at Kolkata in which Member and officers of NCST had participated.

(b): As per the information provided by Anthropological Survey of India, no broad consensus has been reached on specific characteristics useful for developing a scale to distinguish tribal communities. It is pointed out that the issue requires more academic deliberations in view of the regional variations along with differences in viewpoints about the cultural markers of the tribal communities.

(c) & (d): Presently, the classification of Scheduled Tribes is guided by the five criteria set by the Lokur Committee in 1965, namely: Primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact, and backwardness. Government of India on 15.6.1999 (further amended on 25.6.2002 and 14.9.2022) has laid down the modalities for deciding the claims for inclusion in, exclusion from and other modifications in Orders specifying Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lists. As per the modalities, only those proposals which have been recommended and justified by the concerned State Government / UT Administration and concurred with by Registrar General of India (RGI) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) are to be considered and legislation amended. All actions on the proposals are taken as per these approved

modalities. The recommendation of the concerned State Government is pre-requisite to process the case further.

The proposals for inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes of a State or Union Territory follow certain processes as per the modalities. This is a continuous process. Proposals received from the State Government should be accompanied by an ethnographic report. The proposals are examined by the Office of the RGI and then by the NCST. In case the proposal is not recommended by the RGI, the State Governments are communicated the points raised by the RGI, so that additional information, if any, maybe furnished by the State Government. Many such proposals may therefore remain under examination at different levels.
