



National Workshop on Strengthening Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) begins in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

TribeX, a first-of-its-kind digital learning platform developed by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, launched; Ministry signs MoU with Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi

Ministry signs another MoU with KIIT Technology Business Incubator to promote tribal entrepreneurship

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The Ministry of Tribal Affairs today began a two-day National Workshop on Strengthening Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The workshop reaffirms the Government of India's commitment to strengthening institutions that preserve tribal heritage and support inclusive development.

The workshop was inaugurated by Shri Jual Oram, Hon'ble Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, in the presence of Shri Durgadas Uikey, Hon'ble Minister of State for Tribal Affairs; Dr R. Balasubramaniam, Hon'ble Member, NITI Aayog; Shri Nityananda Gond, Hon'ble Minister for ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare, Government of Odisha; Smt. Ranjana Chopra, Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs; Shri B. Parmeshwaran, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha; and Shri Anant Prakash Pandey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, along with senior officials of the Central and State Governments. The proceedings began with the National Anthem and the National Song, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp.



India is witnessing a transformative era in tribal development under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The Government seeks to preserve tribal languages, traditions and knowledge systems while advancing socio-economic empowerment through education, healthcare, livelihood generation and sustainable development. Strengthening TRIs as centres of research, innovation and cultural preservation forms an integral part of this vision.

Organised in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, the workshop brought together nearly 200 participants, including representatives from Tribal Research Institutes, State Tribal Welfare Departments, academia, research institutions, technology organisations, industry, development partners and civil society.

A key highlight of the inaugural session was the launch of TribeX, a digital learning platform to preserve and promote India's tribal arts, culture, languages and traditional knowledge. The platform includes a Digital Academy offering free certificate and UGC-aligned diploma courses in tribal art forms, and a Heritage Archive of tribal literature, oral traditions and cultural practices. The Ministry signed an MoU with Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi, to jointly develop UGC-recognised diploma programmes under TribeX on tribal languages, traditional knowledge, arts, textiles and museology.



The Ministry also signed an MoU with KIIT Technology Business Incubator (KIIT-TBI), Bhubaneswar, to identify, incubate and mentor tribal entrepreneurs through capacity building, market linkages and access to funding.



Addressing the inaugural session, **Shri Jual Oram, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs**, said:

"India's tribal communities possess an extraordinary wealth of languages, dialects, oral traditions and indigenous knowledge that must be preserved for future generations. While several tribal languages have developed scripts, many dialects survive primarily through oral tradition, making systematic documentation an urgent national priority. Tribal Research Institutes have a crucial responsibility to engage with communities, document their languages and traditional knowledge, and share best practices across States."

Speaking on the occasion, **Shri Durgadas Uikey, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs**, said:

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, tribal development has become integral to the nation's journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047, through initiatives such as PM JANMAN, Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan and Eklavya Model Residential Schools. TRIs must now undertake research on emerging priorities such as tribal livelihoods, women's empowerment, education, health, nutrition, climate resilience, digital inclusion and implementation of the Forest Rights Act. The true value of research lies in its ability to shape policies that bring meaningful change to tribal families."

Addressing the gathering, **Dr. R. Balasubramaniam, Member, NITI Aayog**, said:

"Tribal Research Institutes must evolve beyond conventional research bodies into policy think tanks, repositories of indigenous knowledge and centres of excellence for innovation. Research must capture the voices, lived experiences and traditional wisdom of tribal communities, for development is meaningful only when communities become active participants in shaping their own future. As Artificial Intelligence transforms governance, it is equally important to humanise data and keep evidence rooted in community realities."

Welcoming delegates, **Shri Nityananda Gond, Minister for ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare, Government of Odisha**, said:

"Tribal Research Institutes must evolve into centres for policy innovation, digital knowledge and interdisciplinary research, covering tribal education, nutrition, healthcare, migration, climate resilience, forest-based livelihoods and preservation of tribal languages. We must promote modern research tools such as digital documentation, GIS-based mapping and AI-enabled analytics, while ensuring tribal communities become active partners in the research process."

In her opening remarks, **Smt. Ranjana Chopra, Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, said:

"Tribal development has traditionally focused on health, education and infrastructure. There is an equal need to strengthen institutions that preserve tribal heritage, protect constitutional rights and generate evidence for policymaking. Tribal Research Institutes occupy this unique space, but many face challenges of human resources, institutional capacity and domain expertise. This workshop is a platform for TRIs to share experiences and exchange best practices. Its recommendations will guide the Ministry in developing a roadmap to transform TRIs into vibrant centres of knowledge, research and policy support."

In his welcome address, **Shri B. Parmeshwaran, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha**, welcomed the dignitaries and participants. He spoke of Odisha's rich tribal heritage and the State Government's efforts towards tribal welfare and expressed hope that the workshop would yield valuable recommendations for strengthening TRIs across the country.

Delivering the vote of thanks, **Shri Anant Prakash Pandey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, said the workshop would lay the foundation for revamped Tribal Research Institutes, strengthening tribal communities across India and furthering the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

The technical sessions on the first day featured presentations by TRIs from across the country on their achievements, best practices and institutional challenges, followed by discussions on the role of TRIs in policymaking.

Participants then took part in four thematic breakout groups: TRIs as Knowledge and Cultural Resource Centres; Research, Documentation and Evidence Generation for Tribal Development; Technology Integration, GIS, AI and Innovation; and Institutional Strengthening, Human Resources, Governance and Partnerships.

Recommendations from the working groups will be consolidated and deliberated on the second day. The concluding sessions will include expert panel discussions on research ecosystems, institutional reforms and digital transformation, culminating in the adoption of the Bhubaneswar Declaration and a shared roadmap for strengthening Tribal Research Institutes across the country.







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