

Tharu Tribe in India

The Tharu Tribals are the people living in the Terai lowlands, amidst the Sivaliks or lower Himalayas, generally in the southern part of Nepal and northern part of India. The tribe is known for their love of nature and are worshippers of Theravada Buddhism.

In December 2020, the Government of Uttar Pradesh decided to connect the Tharu villages in a few UP districts as a part of the home stay scheme under the Forest Department.

About the Tharu Tribals

A lot of myths are involved with the origin of the Tharu tribe. Tharu people are believed to be living in the eastern Terai since at least the 10th century.

The Government of India has set up a statutory body, [TRIFED](#), which manages and regulates the socio-economic development of the tribal population of the country. Aspirants can visit the linked article and know more about the organisation.

Given below are a few important facts about the Tharu people:

- They are originally believed to be of Rajput origin but then migrated from the Thar Desert to Nepal
- The community belongs to the Terai lowlands, amid the Shivaliks or lower Himalayas
- Maximum people from this tribe work either as forest dwellers or are farmers
- The word “**tharu**” is believed to be derived from “**sthavir**”, meaning followers of ‘**Theravada Buddhism**’
- Tharu people most live in India or Nepal. In India, there are only a few states where the people of this tribe are found. States being Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar
- In India, the Tribe is recognised as “Scheduled Tribes” by the Government, and in Nepal, the tribe is considered as an official nationality by Nepal Government
- A majority of people from this tribe still live in forest areas, grow their crops and survive on them
- They worship Lord Shiva as Mahadev, and call their supreme being Narayan

What is Theravada Buddhism?

- Theravada Buddhism means the doctrine of the elders
- They believe that they are closest to the teachings of Lord Buddha and emphasise on self-liberation through one’s own efforts
- It is the strongest in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar

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About Tharu People

Discussed below are main aspects of the people belonging to the Tharu community.

1. Tharu Culture

- Tharus live in houses, outer walls of which are made completely out of clay, mud, dung and grass
- They have colourful and printed verandah. The designs are generally based on traditional learning and occasionally on modern aspects
- They consider themselves as the people of the forest as they have been residing there for years
- They grow rice, wheat, mustard, corn, vegetables, fruits and lentils near their houses for survival reasons
- Tharu women have a stronger right on the property. This is unlike the north Indian Hindu custom

2. Language

- Multiple Tharu dialects are spoken in India and in Nepal
- These include Hindi, Urdu, Awadhi, Maithili

3. Religion

- Tharus are closely linked to the environment and worship Lord Shiva
- The pantheon of their gods comprises a large number of deities that live in the forest

4. Food Habits

- Bagiya or Dhikri, a steamed dish of rice flour that is eaten with chutney or curry. Ghonghi, an edible snail that is cooked in a curry made of coriander, chilli, garlic, and onion are the two standard items present on a Tharus plate

What is a Tribe?

A Tribe is a group of people which follow the same culture and tradition and have a unique way of living.

What are Scheduled Tribes in India?

According to Article 366(25) of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes are those communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. India is said to be one of the richest in terms of culture and tradition, and these tribes contribute to the diversity of the country.

To know more about the [List of Scheduled Tribes in India](#), candidates can visit the linked article.

UPSC Aspirants can also check the [Difference Between Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe](#) at the linked article.

Significance of Tharu Tribe

- Tharu Tribals are believed to be eco-friendly
- They are known to be able to survive in the malarial areas of Terai which are deadly for outsiders
- The tribal people are culturally rich and have stayed in the forests for years with minimal resources
- The construction of their houses, livelihood, etc. are very traditional

To know about the [Largest Tribe in India](#), visit the linked article.

Why Tharu Tribe for Home Stay Scheme?

The Government has initiated the Home Stay Scheme where domestic and International tourists travelling to tribal areas can stay in the houses of the tribal people and get all the lodging and food facilities through them.

- All income generated will be given directly to the owners of the house
- It will help the tribe showcase their culture and cuisine to the tourists
- It will benefit the tribe people economically

Thus, the districts of Balrampur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur and Pilibhit bordering Nepal have been listed for the Tharu Tribe Home Stay Scheme by the UP Forest Department. This will give an economic boost to the Tharus and let the tourists enjoy the beauty of the habitats made out of natural and forest products.

Candidates can also visit the [List of Government Schemes in India](#) page and get a detailed list of initiatives and policies taken by the Government for the development of the country.

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