

## Quality of Life of Tribal Population in Kerala

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*Scheduled Tribes remain the most backward population in Kerala. The paper examines the quality of life of tribal population during 2001-2011. Deprivation index that measures the quality of life has narrowed down among tribes. But the level of deprivation in terms of housing, basic facilities and economic status is very high compared to the general population. Correlation analysis points to positive association between fertility and deprivation, and a negative association between literacy and deprivation among the tribes. Improvement in basic facilities linked to health and hygiene and economic conditions are imperative for overall well-being of tribal population.*

### Introduction

Scheduled tribes have been recognized as a distinct community in India as per the Constitutional mandate for being the weakest sections of the population in view of common socio-economic and socio-demographic indicators. They are backward not only in comparison with the general population, but also in comparison to the Schedule Caste and Other Backward Classes. For the past few decades, the greatest challenge before Government of India has been the upliftment of this marginalized group. Geographical distribution of the tribal population and demographic and cultural differentials from one area to another and within their own groups impedes all development efforts. Approximately more than 533 tribes are spread throughout different parts of India. The distribution of Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of 104.2 million (Registrar General of India, 2011) in the country varies substantially among the Indian states with most of the north-eastern states having almost 60 to 90 per cent of its population as scheduled tribes, and states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat dominating in terms of sheer numbers.

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