

Tribes of Uttar Pradesh, Major Tribes, Population & Distribution

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Uttar Pradesh has a relatively small tribal population of **over 1.1 million people**, accounting for around **0.5% of the state's population**, with **more than 15 recognised Scheduled Tribe communities**. The major groups include the **Tharu in the Terai belt**, **Gond and Kharwar in the southern Sonbhadra and Mirzapur regions**, along with smaller communities such as the **Agariya and Baiga**. These tribes have distinct traditions, cultural practices, and livelihoods closely linked to agriculture, forests, and natural resources.

Major Tribes of Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh has a relatively small tribal population, mainly concentrated in **southern districts such as Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli and Lalitpur**, with communities known for their distinct culture, traditional knowledge and forest-based livelihoods.

1. Gond

- The **Gond** are one of the most prominent tribal communities of Uttar Pradesh.

- They are mainly found in **Sonbhadra, Mirzapur and surrounding areas**.
- Traditionally, their livelihood has depended on **agriculture, forest resources and wage labour**.
- They have a rich tradition of **folk songs, dances, festivals and community customs**.
- The community has a strong cultural connection with **forests and natural resources**.

2. Kol

- The **Kol** community is mainly found in **Sonbhadra, Mirzapur and nearby regions**.
- Agriculture and **daily wage labour** are important sources of livelihood.
- Traditionally, many Kol families have depended on **forest products and local natural resources**.
- Their social and cultural life is closely connected with **community traditions and rural practices**.

3. Kharwar

- The **Kharwar** are primarily concentrated in **Sonbhadra and adjoining areas**.
- **Agriculture, forest-based activities and wage labour** are important occupations.
- They have traditionally maintained a close relationship with the **forest and surrounding natural environment**.
- Their culture includes distinctive **customs, festivals and traditional practices**.

4. Chero

- The **Chero** community is mainly found in **Sonbhadra and Mirzapur**.
- Agriculture is an important source of livelihood, along with **wage labour and forest-based activities**.
- They have a distinct **social and cultural identity**.
- Their traditional practices are influenced by the **rural and forest environment** of southern Uttar Pradesh.

5. Baiga

- The **Baiga** are a tribal community associated particularly with the **forest regions of Sonbhadra**.
- Traditionally, they have had a strong dependence on **forests and natural resources**.
- They possess traditional knowledge related to **medicinal plants and forest resources**.
- Their culture includes distinctive **rituals, beliefs, folk traditions and community practices**.
- Forest conservation and livelihood security are important issues for the community.

6. Parahiya

- The **Parahiya** are mainly found in **Sonbhadra and surrounding forest areas**.
- Their traditional livelihood includes **agriculture, forest resources and wage labour**.
- They have distinctive **customs, traditions and social practices**.
- Improving access to **education, healthcare, employment and basic infrastructure** is important for their socio-economic development.

Culture and Traditions of Uttar Pradesh Tribes

The tribal communities of Uttar Pradesh have a rich cultural heritage shaped by their close relationship with **nature, forests, agriculture, community life, and traditional beliefs.**

- **Folk Music and Dance:** Traditional songs and dances are performed during festivals, marriages, harvests, and other community celebrations.
- **Festivals:** Many tribal festivals are linked to **agriculture, seasons, nature, and religious beliefs.**
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Communities possess valuable knowledge of **medicinal plants, forest products, agriculture, and local biodiversity.**
- **Art and Handicrafts:** Tribal communities practise traditional forms of **painting, handicrafts, basket-making, pottery, and other local crafts.**
- **Nature Worship:** **Forests, rivers, trees, animals, and other elements of nature** hold an important place in many tribal traditions.
- **Community Life:** Community institutions and collective participation play an important role in **social decision-making and maintaining traditions.**
- **Language and Oral Traditions:** Folk stories, songs, legends, and traditional knowledge are often passed from **one generation to another through oral traditions.**
- **Traditional Customs:** Marriage ceremonies, birth rituals, festivals, and other social practices reflect the **distinct identity and heritage** of different tribal groups.

Government Initiatives for Tribal Development in Uttar Pradesh

The government has introduced several initiatives to improve the **education, healthcare, livelihoods, housing, and social security** of tribal communities in Uttar Pradesh, with special focus on remote and economically weaker tribal populations.

- **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP):** Focuses on the socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes through targeted funding.
- **Post-Matric Scholarship:** Provides financial support to tribal students pursuing higher education.
- **Pre-Matric Scholarship:** Supports the education of tribal students at the school level.
- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):** Provide quality residential education to students from Scheduled Tribe communities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN):** Focuses on improving basic facilities and livelihoods of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006:** Recognises eligible traditional forest and land rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities.
- **Livelihood and Skill Development:** Promotes employment, entrepreneurship, skill training, and income generation among tribal communities.
- **Healthcare and Infrastructure:** Government programmes aim to improve access to **healthcare, drinking water, housing, roads, and other basic services** in tribal areas.