

Speech by the Hon'ble Governor of Tripura
In International Conference on Tribal Resistance,
Resilience, and Reimagining Futures
Organized by IIT Madras

Director of IIT Madras Prof Kamakoti Ji

My Dear IITians, / Deans, /HODs, /Professors, /Experts,/
Intellectual Think Tank, /Speakers of different sessions, /
Members /of the Organizing Committee, /

Teaching and non Teaching staff/ of the IIT Madras

Respected dignitaries, /scholars, /participants, /and dear
friends/

Earlier I attend a program /in the same Premises /along
with Music Maestro Ilayaraja Ji /related to Music /and
Culture, /Today iam here /to talk to you /about our Tribal
Resistance, /Resilience,/ and Reimagining Futures (రీ
ఇమౌజిసింగ్ ఫ్ యూచరస్)

- It is both an honor and a privilege / to address this esteemed gathering at this truly thought-provoking international conference.
- I extend my heartfelt appreciation / to the Indian Institute of Technology Madras / for organizing this timely event / on Tribal Resistance, / Resilience, / and Reimagining Futures. (రీ ఇమౌజిన్సంగ్ ఫ్ యూచరస్)
- In this conference, / many important topics / are going to be discussed. You have selected / very good topics. The papers presented / in this conference are very valuable.
- Each topic of this seminar / has potential to discuss/ day long. / The insights shared here / assert / the deep historical / and cultural wealth / of India's tribal communities, / and the urgent need / to listen, learn, / and act together / to secure their rightful place / in our national journey./
- I believe those who make decisions / and formulate policies / regarding tribal development / will definitely pay attention / to these. / Please make

efforts / to take forward / the suggestions of this conference.

- The tribal history of India is / one of objection, dignity, / and unwavering connection / to the land. From / Bhagwan/ Birsa Munda / in the forests of Chota nagpur / to the Santhal Hul, / the Bhil uprisings, / and the courageous resistance / of tribes in the Northeast./
- These movements were not just rebellions/ —they were assertions/ of sovereignty, / identity, / and cultural integrity. /
- It is our collective duty / to honour / and restore / those narratives so that future generations/ know that/ the freedom movement / was not complete without / tribal resistance.
- Across India, / tribal communities / continue to face a series of / interconnected challenges. / Despite constitutional safeguards / and welfare programs,/ there is few pressing concerns.

- The erosion / of indigenous languages /, which carry unique / world views / and environmental wisdom, / threatens / not just linguistic diversity / but cultural survival.
- Many tribal belts continue / to suffer / from poor access / to healthcare, / sanitation, / and education. In far too many cases, decisions affecting tribal lands/ and lives are made / without their consultation / or participation.
- In regions affected by conflicts / particularly in central India/ and parts of the Northeast /tribal populations/ often find themselves / trapped between / insurgent groups.
- Additionally, climate change / and environmental degradation / affect indigenous communities, / even though / they have historically lived / in harmony with nature/ and contributed / the least to global emissions.

- In the context of Tripura, / we witness both the richness/ and the Freedom moment struggles. The state is/ home to 19 tribal groups,/ including the Tripuri, Reang (Bru), Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, / and others. These communities / possess rich cultural traditions/ reflected in their music, / dances like Hojagiri, /festivals like Garia Puja, / and their indigenous knowledge of agriculture and forest conservation.
- Generally.... Why does resistance arise at times?
It comes for the land, / for survival, / for the family, or for the children. When their existence,/ culture, festivals, / and traditions are troubled,/ they rebel. When decades of oppression,/ displacement, /and decline in values occur, /when their connection / with nature is broken, / rebellion arises. In such situations,/ we must protect their language, / culture, / traditions,/ festivals, / and attire.

Ex: 1. Pahalgam Incident

2. Animals Sacrifice for their biological family

3. California – outbreak of wild fires burns every year

- Some problems arise right here./ In the name of development, / the activities / we undertake/ are disrupting / tribal lives. While protecting /their livelihoods, / we must also take measures / for the development / of their habitations.
- In fact, / they are the protectors/ of nature / and the environment. Since the beginning / of outside dominance / in forest areas, / movements have started. In reality, / those movements are not new. They are the ones/ who understand / the value and importance/ of trees, / forests, / animals, / and land.
- No matter the circumstances, they have learned how to live and are the ones who teach that way of life. That is why Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji established tribal universities. He also started tribal museums. Now there is an opportunity to preserve their traditions that have lasted for years.

- The true strength of tribal communities / lies in their/ deep connection / with nature. / Even in times when iron was not available, / they hunted animals / and practiced agriculture. / When there were no matchboxes, / they produced fire. / Their skills are / truly astonishing. For Example In Telangana,/ Paddy crop is cultivated/ as a wet crop, / whereas in Tripura,/ the same crop is grown / as a dry crop.

EX: Bamboo Drones-will not Detected by any radar Ancient Traditional Skill to Technology

- This conference would brought /to light /numerous critical dimensions/ of the tribal experience/ — ranging from religion /and culture, /to women's roles, /sustainable development,/ and the intersection/ of ecology and endemic.
- Sessions such as “Cry of the Wilderness,” /which explored /tribal freedom movements /in Northeast India /during the colonial period,/ serve as powerful reminders/ of how much tribal history remains/ to be uncovered/ and integrated/ into our national consciousness.

- Similarly, / dialogues on autonomy, / governance, / and education / echo the urgent call/ for justice—not just legal, / but social,/ cultural, / and environmental justice.
- The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), / under the Sixth Schedule, / has been a progressive step/ towards self-governance/ . TTAADC (Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council)/ is working for / the development of tribal people./ Every state has / some kind of agency / under a different name/ for this purpose. However, / in the Northeastern states,/ these institutions / function / almost parallel / to the state government / for tribal development, / even sending audit and accounts reports / directly to the Governor.
- We must direct / our tribal communities/ toward modern / technological and knowledge-based fields. The central government / is making all kinds of/ efforts for this. / Wherever further efforts/ are needed, / they must be brought/ to the government's attention.

- However, issues / such as the rehabilitation, / disputes/ over forest rights,/ and the youth's struggle / between tradition and modernity/ require sustained / and sensitive attention.
- The Wayanad floods – an ecological collapse – we do not want such kind of development.

Ex: Tea Gardens Protect the Land sliding

- Needs and priorities /keep changing from time to time. /Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji /referred to Birsa Munda /as the 'Defender of the Forest'./ By launching /a special initiative/ called Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day), /Modi Ji is giving significant importance/ to tribal development./
- Conferences / like these/ help in self-review / and improvement of policies/ and schemes. Among tribal communities, / there exists political and social strategy/ they resolve /disputes directly/ among themselves.

- Tribal heroes/ like /Maveeran Alagumuthu Kone, /who revolted against the British,/ and Ondiveeran,/ a commander/ who fought /against the East India Company.
- The Marudhu brothers, /Periya Marudhu /and Chinna Marudhu, /also played a significant role/ in resisting British rule/ in the late 18th century, / Puli Thevar /and Veeran Sundaralingam / from Tamilnadu Region / are recognized /for their/ resistance /against the British.
- Alluri Seetharama Raju from AP, /Rani Gaidinliu from Manipur, /Komaram Bheem from Telangana ,/ Tilka Manjhi from Bihar, /and others /must find their rightful place/ in textbooks /as aligned /to National Education Policy -2020 /conceived by/ our Honble Prime Minister /Narendra Modi Ji. /This is not merely a gesture of inclusion/ —it is a commitment to Nationalism.

అదనంగా చౌప్ పడౌనౌకౌ

1. Students take the pledge to preserve the Culture
2. Holidays to be declared for Local Festivals
3. Eco Tourism to be promoted
4. Anti-Addiction Propagated for healthy Future Society
5. Human Trafficking to Be Controlled
6. Major Problems like floods, droughts, and forest fires are to be tackled.
7. Globalization, Modernization, Western Influence effects on Tribals and Tribal Cultural Identity
8. Annual Cultural Fest to Be Organized
9. Traditional Games Competition to be conducted in Tribal Villages
10. Tribal Societies to be formed to protect the soul of their identity

- The central government/ frames/ region-specific laws /considering /the tribal way of life, /while continuing /to preserve /their cultural identity.
- It is time to move / from dialogue to action. / I would like to / humbly / propose several paths / forward.
- **First**, /we must strengthen/ the empowerment / of tribal communities. / The Forest Rights Act (2006)/ must be implemented/ in both letter and spirit, / ensuring / tribal families receive / rightful ownership/ and management/ of their ancestral lands. /
- **Second**, /education must be/ rooted in cultural identity. / We must promote / primary education / in tribal mother tongue,/ develop tribal literature (**Ex: Kokborok in Tripura**) , / and encourage / the inclusion of indigenous/ knowledge systems / in school and college / curricula. / Language is not only a medium of instruction—/ it is a repository of wisdom, / ethics, and memory.

- **Third,** /development must be /culturally sensitive/ and /environmentally responsible. / Infrastructure/ and welfare schemes /should be designed /and implemented /with the active participation/of tribal communities.
- We must support /tribal artisans, /farmers, /and youth/ through /fair access/ to markets,/ digital tools, /and credit. /Similarly,/ the preservation of/ tribal folklore, /rituals, /crafts, /and music /must be integrated /into /our national /and /regional cultural policy.
- **Fourth,** /Tribal representation /must be meaningful./ We need /more tribal voices/ in policymaking bodies./ Political inclusion /must be complemented /by leadership training.
- Finally, / we must undertake a national effort/ to reclaim /and retell tribal histories.
- The tribal worldview /offers us /an alternative/—a world /where nature is sacred, /community is central, /and life is lived with balance.
- Tribal communities /are not relics/ of the past/. They are leaders/ of a sustainable inclusive./

- Let this gathering /be a beginning./ Let us carry forward/ the knowledge /shared here into policies, /institutions, / and grassroots action. / Let us build an India / where every tribal child / can walk / with pride, / knowing their language, / land, / and legacy are protected. / Let us reimagining / a nation that walks / with its tribes—beside them,/ with trust, / with respect, / and with love./

Thank you all.

Jai Hind.

Jai Janjatiya Bharat.