

**CBCS BA/BSc 2<sup>th</sup> SEMESTER (HONORS)**  
**PAPER (GGY HC – 2016): Human Geography (Theory)**

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## **5. MAN AND CULTURE**

### **MAJOR TRIBAL PEOPLE OF INDIA AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

**Socio-economic** means relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors. The characteristics include **social** and **economic** standing, level of education, current profession, and ethnic background or heritage. There are around 645 distinct tribes in India. The total population of Scheduled Tribes is 10.43 crore as per the Census 2011 which accounts for 8.6% of the total population of the country.

#### **GONDS TRIBE:**

Gonds are one of the largest tribal groups in the world. Gonds live all over central India i.e. in the states of Maharashtra and Odisha. Apart from Madhya Pradesh, Gonds are also found in Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. They are the largest Tribe in India, South Asia, and perhaps the world with nine million people out of which four million reside in Central India. Mostly Gonds live around the Satpura Hills, Maikala Range, Son-Deogarh uplands on the Bastar plateau and Garhjat Hills of northern Odisha.

**Culture:** Gonds Tribes main deity is the pantheon – a single Temple which bows to all the Gods and Culture of the World. The Clan of Gond is known as Persa Pen who protects all Clan Members. Gonds believe in the equality of the human beings without the discrimination of higher and lower society. Mostly Gonds live in a Village with a Headman known as Mahji or Patel. The Village Council of Gond Tribe divides the Gonds into Castes called Ahir (Cowherds), Agaria (Blacksmith), Dhuli (Drummers) and Pardhan (bard and singers).

**Occupation:** The Gonds' ties with the forest suggest that, in the past, they were nomadic hunters or food gatherers who took up shifting cultivation. Today they are mainly plough-cultivators whose agriculture differs little from other farming castes in their region. Although some Gond communities have risen to the status of landowners, increasing pressure on land is reflected in large numbers of landless labourers among the Gonds.

**Literacy:** Education and literacy levels among the Gonds vary but are generally low. Literacy varies from 62.5% in Maharashtra to 50.3% in Madhya Pradesh. Among females in Madhya Pradesh, it drops to only 30.4%. Few children attend school regularly, and girls rarely continue past primary school. Only 1.5% of the population, mainly males, continues on to graduate level studies.

**People:** Gonds tribes of India origin have a typical Indian dress culture. Men in the Gonds tribe wear Dhoti (long piece of cotton cloth wrapped around the waist passing through the legs). Women wear soft cotton saris along with the Choli or blouse. Agriculture is their main work. Gonds tribes are

today mainly farmers. While some Gond communities have risen to the status of landowners, many are landless laborers. Herding cattles is a part of Gond Tribes occupation as part of their livelihood.

**Food:** The Staple Food of Gonds is two millets known as Kodo and Kutki. Vegetables are usually grown in kitchen gardens or collected from forests. Gonds grow tobacco for smoking and make liquor for Mahua tree.

**Language:** The prime language spoken by Gond Tribe is Gondi. Beside this, the Gond tribes have a good command on Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Parsi and many other Dravidian languages. Festivals: Celebrations for Gonds have Danderi dancers who retell events from Gond. Sacrifices are made by the Village Priests called Devari in most of the festivals. Their festive lives are filled with animal sacrifices. Gonds festivals are usually related to agriculture.

**Note: Follow this method and complete the assignment**