

2020

**Speech of the Hon'ble Governor for Tribal Youth  
Exchange Programme to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020**

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Namaskar,

I am happy to be present here for the inauguration of Tribal Youth Exchange Programme of NSS from different States of India. I have gone through the manual and seen the valuable contents and I am impressed with this voluntary organisation dedicated to the growth and development of young people of India, especially the tribal population of India.

The NSS motto is 'NOT ME BUT YOU'. This expresses the essence of democratic living and upholds the need for selfless service and appreciation of the other person's point of view. It underlines that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of society as a whole. Therefore, it should be the aim of the NSS to demonstrate this motto in its day-to-day programme.

The symbol of the NSS is based on the 'Rath' wheel of the Konark Sun Temple of Orissa. These giant wheels of the Sun Temple portray the cycle of creation, preservation and release and signify the movement in life across time and space. The wheel signifies the progressive cycle of life.

Gentleman, I am happy to learn that 300 NSS volunteers from North east and 200 NSS volunteers from all

other states have participated in this tribal youth exchange programme. I believe this programme will sensitize our tribal youth to the rich cultural heritage of our Country and enable them to appreciate the concept of unity in diversity. This programme will also provide an opportunity to the tribal youth to understand the cultural ethos, language, lifestyles of the people depicting Socio-economic & Cultural Development of this state-Assam.

Gentlemen, when we are deliberating on tribal people, it is pertinent on our part to know who is tribal. A tribe or tribal is an Indian group that possesses certain qualities and characteristics which make it a unique culturally, socially and anthropologically. However, the nature of what constitutes an Indian tribe has changed considerably over the course of centuries. But certain characteristics have remained the same.

Now, I shall speak on tribes of Assam and its development goals. Assam's human landscape is as colourful and varied as her physiography. The state has been the melting pot of diverse ethnic and cultural streams. People from various traits, including Austro-Asiatics, Dravidians, Tibeto-Burmans, Mongoloids and Aryans have all made Assam their home.

The ethnic groups of Assam include Bodos, Dimasas, Karbi, Tai-Ahom, Mising, Rabha, Deori, and Tiwa so on and so forth whom we proudly call tribals.



According to the 2001 census, the Scheduled Tribes population stay in Assam was 12.4 percent. The State has 25 (Twenty five) notified Scheduled Tribes. There are altogether 15 number of Scheduled Tribes (Hill) and 14 Scheduled Tribes (Plains). Each of them has distinctive culture, language, folkways, legal system, religious belief and practices. They are at various stages of development socially, educationally and economically. The Scheduled Tribes, both plains and hills are distributed in all the 33 districts of the state.

Now Gentlemen, I am touching upon issues that are core in governing our tribal people:

**First is Governance:**

There is no 5th Schedule Area in the State of Assam. However, under 6th Schedule of the Constitution of India, there are 3 (three) Autonomous Councils viz. Bodoland Territorial Council (comprising of 4 districts namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (comprising of 2 districts Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong) and North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (comprising of 1 district that is Dima Hasao).

Moreover, there are several other autonomous councils in the state.

**Next issue is welfare of Tribal people:.**

There is a State Level Advisory Council for the Welfare of Scheduled Tribe which is chaired by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam with the Hon'ble Minister, WPT & BC, (Welfare of Plain Tribe and Backward Classes) Assam as its Vice-Chairman and the Senior-Most Secretary in the WPT & BC Department as Member Secretary. All ST MPs and MLAs are the members of this Advisory Council. It gives valuable suggestions and recommendation for proper implementation of plans and programme and reviews.

As per Govt. of India's guideline issued by Government of India, New Delhi, at the State Level, the WPT & BC Department is the Nodal Agency authorized to lead the process of development. The Nodal Department is to work in close coordination with all relevant Line Departments.

### **Strengthening the Tribal Development Projects:**

There are 22 **Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs)** and 50 Sub Divisional Welfare Offices (SDWOs) under WPT & BC Department through which various development schemes are implemented in Assam. Under each ITDP, there is a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and Sub-Divisional ST Development Board under each SDWO at the District and Sub-Divisional level for implementation of schemes.

The Govt. has mooted one service rule to have permanent Project Directors for Integrated Tribal Development Projects as



well as Sub Divisional Welfare Offices in Assam. The infrastructure of these field offices will be revamped.

**Protection of cultural uniqueness of tribals:**

One Tribal museum would be set up in Assam in order to preserve and enhance the esteem of tribal people towards their culture and heritage.

Each district with sizeable tribal population should at least have one centre of excellence educational institutes like Don Bosco Institute by engaging well trained qualified teachers with requisite infrastructure to make them gateway for higher studies and research.

A Tribal University can be also be set up to cater to the need of Tribal students in higher studies and research.

**There is also a need for resolving forest land disputes and conferring land ownership to the forest dwellers by drawing specific cut off date:**

The protection under existing Tribal belts and blocks need to be enforced in letter and spirit. Rights of traditional forest dwellers need to be ensured by the executing agencies through awareness and capacity building at the cutting-edge level.

There is an urgent need for capacity building exercises for all stakeholders. Seminars and workshops (for key officials) and grass-roots level awareness programmes have to be

undertaken in order to ensure due rights to tribal and other traditional forest dwellers.

### **Right of the tribes on the forest produce:**

The tribal residing in forest villages have the rights on minor forest produce as per the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The Government of India (GoI) and Government of Assam have introduced the Van Dhan Vikas Kendra for marketing of minor forest produce. In this regard, minimum support price (MSP) to minor forest produce (MFP) has also been fixed by Government of India.

The Govt. of Assam has accorded administrative approval of Rs. 166.25 lakhs for construction of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and other marketing infrastructure for forest produce.

It is also to be observed that majority of the tribal areas of Assam are organic by default. The tribal people traditionally do not pursue chemical fertilizing. Therefore, in order to preserve the organic practice and ensure rights of the tribes over their products, certification is required.

### **Special residential schools in the tribal areas:**

At present 5(Five) Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) have so far been sanctioned and process of construction is underway (in Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Kokrajhar, Baksa and Barpeta). For financial year 12(Twelve)



such model schools have been earmarked by Govt. of India covering the districts of Karbi Anglong (3), Dima Hasao(3), Kamrup(1), Goalpara(1), Baksa(1), Udalguri(1), Chirang(1) and Dhemaji(1).

However, without much ado, I want to thank Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for organizing this programme and also Don Bosco for hosting this program in its premises and giving the best to the young people, especially the tribal youth.

Swami Vivekananda once said, "When you give people a share of responsibility in sharpening their lives you increase their self-confidence, without which they are nothing. When they have faith in themselves, they are prepared to take, on even the most difficult problems and solve them.

My appeal to you is please make full use of this opportunity given to you. Learn from one another's culture and enjoy the diversity of India and experience the unity. Have your goals clear, acquire knowledge, work hard and persevere without giving up and make a difference to people through your service. With the ladder of courage and determination you can reach the heights of the sky.

Friends, as a country, we have significant social and economic challenges ahead of us. We face problems of varied nature, which require bold leadership and innovative solutions. We are nation of great talents. Realising this our Hon'ble Prime

Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has taken a series of innovative steps like Stand-Up India, Make in India, Digital India and empowered our work force to face the challenges and the opportunity to transform our nation in the process. Please use these opportunities and go forward to pursue your mission. The world will be yours. God Bless you.

Thank you,

**Jai Hind**