

**Conference on Scheduled Tribe Women & Children: Issues &
Challenges for Development**

30-31 May 2011

Vigyan Bhawan

PRESS RELEASE

A two days **Conference on 'Issues & Challenges for Development of Scheduled Tribe Women & Children'** has been organized by the Ministry of Women & Child Development on **30th and 31st May** at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. The conference is the second in a series of conferences on specific social groups of women. The first one was held on Scheduled Caste women and children in January 2011.

The Secretary, Women and Child Development, Ministry of Women and Child Development in his welcome remarks emphasized that the planning processes need to provide for specific social groups to ensure inclusive growth. **Smt. Krishna Tirath, Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) for Women & Child Development, inaugurated the conference.** She drew attention to the fact that tribals lagged behind in most social indicators be it poverty, health or literacy and ST women and children were lagging behind even further. She stressed the need to focus on ST women and children during framing of tribal policies and budgets, and emphasized on the need to review the effectiveness of Tribal Sub Plan approach for reaching out to them. The National Programmes like MGNREGA, ICDS, NRHM, and SSA have been all universalized and have the potential to address concerns of

tribals and tribal areas. There was the need to strengthen the coverage of tribal women and children under these programmes. She also mentioned the need to focus on issues of tribals related to forest rights, land alienation and distress migration with a gender perspective. Most importantly for curtailing the distress migration she highlighted the need to deal with concerns of migrant women workers through smart cards and registration of migrants by Panchayats at the source and by the urban local bodies at the destination.

The conference has representation of tribals from more than 15 States across the country including that of North East. A number of stakeholders including Central Government Ministries, State Governments, Tribal Research Institutes, experts and representatives of civil society organizations also participated. Representatives of Ministries of Tribal Affairs, Home Affairs, Environment and Forests, Panchayati Raj, Science and Technology, have been participating in it, along with the representatives from States of Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Gujarat, Kerala, Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Orissa, Tripura, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

The experts and participants have deliberated in the Plenary Sessions and Working Group sessions on the problems in the areas of Health and Nutrition; Education; Livelihood Opportunities; PESA; Forest Rights; Land Alienation; Exploitation and Atrocities of Tribal women and Children. Experts like Dr. R.S. Tolia, Dr. P.K. Sivanandan, Shri. K. B Saxena, Shri M. Kujur, Mrs Vasavi Kiro, Ms. Shamim, Ms, Razia Ismail, Dr. Jyotsna Chatterji, etc have been participating in the discussions.

The major points made were those related to non recognition of community rights of tribals over land and forest; implementation of labour laws particularly the Inter State Migrant Labour Act to meet the needs of tribals; tribal impact assessment in all development projects; need for studies on the migratory trends from mountainous regions to plains; impact of Climate Change on tribal migration; legislation for domestic workers; and special provision for conflict zones and mountain regions.

The Conference has made a set of recommendations on several issues and challenges for the socio-economic empowerment of ST women and children. These would be proposed to the Working Groups of different Ministries for the 12th Five Year Plan for consideration.
