

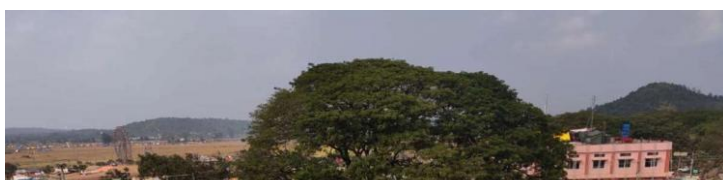
Advertisement



<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/adivasi-activists-demand-tribal-religion-column-census-2021-137502>

## Adivasi activists demand 'Tribal' religion column in Census 2021

Members of the tribal community and activists said that this has been a long pending demand.



The NEWS Minute



[Support us](#)



Advertisement

NEWS **ADIVASIS IDENTITY** | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020 - 17:04



Written by [Charan Teja](#) [Follow @CharanT16](#)

Adivasi activists from the National Adivasi-Indigenous Religion Coordination Committee (NAIRCC) have urged the Union government to include a 'Tribal' religion column in the upcoming 2021 Census. Activists and intellectuals from the tribal community say that a separate column for identifying their religion in the Census has been a demand for a long time. The AIRCC also thanked the Andhra Pradesh government for including 'Tribal' religion as the tenth option among the 12 options in a recent household survey conducted by village volunteers.

Advertisement

Speaking to TNM, Ramarao Dora, Coordination Committee member of NAIRCC said, "The Union government should include the 'Tribal' religion column in the 2021 Census. Our identity is being pushed to inexistence. In the long run, we may lose our constitutional safeguards if our religious identity is not specified and is included in Hindu religion."

"This is not a new demand. We have been demanding this for decades. A lot of damage happened to our identity by the time we learnt our constitutional safeguards. In the interest of tribal people across the country, the Union government should include the option in the upcoming Census."

Featured Videos from TNM

According to NAIRCC, tribal people were officially categorised as 'aboriginals' from 1871 to 1892 and as 'Animists' between 1901 and 1942. In 1932, they say that their religion was identified as 'Tribal religion'. After Indian independence, tribal people were identified as Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the Hindu religious identity was attributed, NAIRCC said.

Advertisement

The Scheduled Tribes constitute over 8.6% of the total population of the country, and a majority of them live in the rural areas comprising 11.3% of the total rural population in the country as per the 2011 Census.

Ramarao Dora further said that due to illiteracy and a language difference, tribal people were unable to communicate their religious identity. He further pointed out that invasion of non-tribal religions into Scheduled Areas was threatening their culture and religious practices.

Dr K Sudha, Assistant Professor of Law in Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU) and General Secretary of the Human Rights Forum (HRF), said that the demand of the tribal activists is "legit and constitutional".

Observing the demand from the community to identify their religion as 'Tribal' in the Census, she said, "Whether the government considers their demand or not, the tribal people have the right to preserve their religion and cultural practices as guaranteed by the Constitution."