

# COUNTERCURRENTS.ORG

- Palestine
- India
- World
- Human Rights
- Arts/Literature
- Imperialism
- Climate Change
- Counter Solutions
- More... ▾

<https://countercurrents.org/2025/07/civilizational-justice-why-adviasis-must-be-declared-the-original-inhabitants-of-india/>

## Civilizational Justice: Why Adviasis must be declared the original inhabitants of India

in India by Satya Sagar 14/07/2025



The Indian subcontinent stands at a critical juncture in its civilizational journey. After centuries of displacement, marginalization, and systematic erasure, the time has come to acknowledge a fundamental truth: Adviasis, India's indigenous peoples, are the original inhabitants of this land.

The claim of Adviasis is not written on deeds or treaties but is etched into the very DNA of the country's soil. It is the Adviasis who represent the longest, unbroken legacy of living in harmony with Mother India, predating all subsequent waves of migration, invasion, and settlement that have shaped the subcontinent's complex demographic tapestry.

To formally declare Adviasis as the original Indians is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a necessary act of historical justice that must fundamentally reshape how India approaches governance, development, and cultural identity.

Search... 

### Join Our Newsletter

Get the latest CounterCurrents updates straight to your inbox.

Name

E-mail

Join Our Newsletter

### Annual Subscription

Join CounterCurrents Annual Fund Raising Campaign and help us

Subscribe Now

### Latest News

What It Feels Like When You Die from Hunger: Gaza's



Their needs, priorities, and demands should not be peripheral considerations in policy-making but must occupy the central position they have been denied for millennia.

## Centuries of Dehumanization

The tragic story of India's indigenous peoples is one of systematic dispossession that began long before colonial rule and continues to this day. Archaeological evidence suggests that Adivasi communities have inhabited the Indian subcontinent for over 10,000 years (if not much more), developing sophisticated systems of governance, sustainable resource management, and spiritual practices that maintained ecological balance across vast territories.

Wave after wave of colonizing migrants, settlers, invaders, and marauders have pushed these original inhabitants deeper into forests, hills, and marginal lands. The Aryans, various Central Asian tribes, Islamic conquerors, and finally European colonizers all contributed to this process of displacement. Each wave not only seized Adivasi lands but also imposed alien systems of administration, religion, and social organization that fundamentally disrupted indigenous ways of life.

The colonial period accelerated this destruction exponentially. The British Forest Act of 1865 and subsequent legislation systematically stripped Adivasis of their traditional rights over forests and natural resources. What had been community-managed ecosystems for thousands of years suddenly became "state property," with the original inhabitants reclassified as "encroachers" on their own ancestral lands.

Post-independence India, despite constitutional protections for Scheduled Tribes, has largely continued this pattern of displacement under the banner of "development." Large-scale mining operations, industrial projects, and dam construction have disproportionately affected Adivasi territories, with studies showing that while tribal people constitute less than 9% of India's population, they comprise 40% of those displaced by development projects.

## Of Rakshasas and Racist Narratives

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of the historical injustice against Adivasis has been their systematic demonization in Indian mythology and popular culture. Hindu epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata consistently portray indigenous peoples as "rakshasas" (demons), "asuras" (anti-gods), or "dasyus" (enemies of the gods). This mythological framework has served to justify violence against indigenous communities for over two millennia.

In the Ramayana, the kingdom of Lanka, ruled by Ravana, is depicted as a realm of demons. However, archaeological and anthropological evidence suggests that these "demons" were likely indigenous peoples with their own sophisticated civilization. The epic's narrative of Rama's victory over these "demonic" forces can be read as a mythologized account of Aryan expansion and the subjugation of indigenous populations.

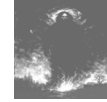
Similarly, in the Mahabharata, various tribes are described as "mlecchas" (barbarians) or "rakshasas," creatures to be fought and conquered by the righteous Aryan heroes. The Naga peoples, clearly identifiable as indigenous snake-worshipping tribes, are consistently portrayed as adversaries of the



**Starvation  
Crisis in Slow  
Motion**  
by Quds News Network  
18/07/2025



**Crucial Social  
Values for  
Protective,  
Peaceful World**  
by Bharat Dogra  
18/07/2025



**The Storm  
Beneath the  
Silence**  
by Ashish Singh  
18/07/2025



**Gutting Our  
Basic  
Protections**  
by Sally Dugman  
18/07/2025



**Waste-ing:  
From Wasted  
Lives to  
Wasteocene**  
by Dr Sayan Dey  
18/07/2025



**A "solar scam"  
waiting to be  
discovered?**  
by E A S Sarma  
18/07/2025



**NH66 in Kerala:  
Built Against  
Water logic,  
Designed  
to Collapse?**  
by Sridhar  
Radhakrishnan  
18/07/2025



**Not legislation,  
but Harmony  
and Secularism  
Can Prevent  
Blasphemy**  
by Dr Arun Mitra  
18/07/2025



**ALIFA  
condemns the  
dastardly attack  
on journalist  
Sneha Barwe &  
calls for  
immediate  
arrest of  
assaulter &  
judicial inquiry**  
by All India Feminist  
Alliance  
18/07/2025

Aryan protagonists.

This mythological demonization has created a civilizational narrative where the oppression of indigenous peoples is not just justified but celebrated as the triumph of dharma (righteousness) over adharma (evil). Contemporary incidents of violence against Adivasis often carry echoes of this ancient racist mythology, with perpetrators viewing themselves as upholders of dharma against demonic forces.

The time has come for India to confront this mythological racism honestly. The nation must acknowledge that these “demons” of our epics were likely the original inhabitants of the land, whose only crime was defending their territories and way of life against invading forces. A formal apology from the Government of India to all Adivasi communities for centuries of mythological demonization and its continuing social consequences is long overdue.

### Learning from Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Far from being the “primitive” or “backward” peoples portrayed in mainstream narratives, Adivasi communities possess sophisticated knowledge systems that modern India desperately needs to learn from. Their traditional ecological knowledge, accumulated over millennia, offers crucial insights for addressing contemporary environmental crises.

Adivasi communities have developed sustainable agricultural practices that maintain soil fertility without external inputs, water conservation techniques that ensure year-round availability, and forest management systems that preserve biodiversity while meeting human needs. Their understanding of medicinal plants forms the foundation of Ayurveda and other traditional healing systems, yet they receive no recognition or compensation for this invaluable contribution to human knowledge.

Indigenous spiritual practices, centred on reverence for nature and community harmony, offer profound alternatives to the materialistic worldview that has driven environmental destruction. Their belief systems recognize the sacred in all aspects of the natural world, creating ethical frameworks that prevent overexploitation of resources.

The rest of India must approach these knowledge systems with humility and respect, not as subjects for appropriation but as wisdom traditions deserving of protection and support.

### Beyond the Hindu Umbrella

One of the most contentious issues in contemporary India is the systematic appropriation of Adivasi spiritual practices under the Hindu umbrella. The census classification of most tribal communities as “Hindu” despite their distinct belief systems represents a form of cultural colonialism that must be challenged.

When the ideologues of Hindutva complain about ‘conversion’ of Hindus into Christianity or Islam they conveniently forget that the most blatant example of religious conversion in India is the surreptitious transformation of all Adivasis into ‘Hindus’, through spinning of false narratives and the stroke of the bureaucratic pen.



**Omar  
Abdullah's fight  
for Freedom**  
by Sandeep Pandey  
18/07/2025



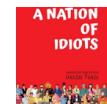
**India 2025:  
Building Big,  
Breaking Fast  
— A Wake-Up  
Call for  
Infrastructure  
Reform**  
by Mohd Ziyauddin Khan  
18/07/2025



**A Catastrophic  
New Normal  
Has Arrived**  
by Robert Hunziker  
18/07/2025



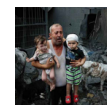
**Vedanta is  
Crippling HZL**  
by E A S Sarma  
18/07/2025



**A Nation of  
Idiots**  
by Shahrukh Ahmed  
Mazumdar  
18/07/2025



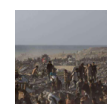
**AIMPLB's  
Conservative  
Agendas  
Versus  
Enlightened  
Quranic Values**  
by V A Mohamad Ashrof  
18/07/2025



**Game Theory  
and the  
Geopolitics of  
Force: How  
Israel's Military  
Logic Shapes  
Global  
Repression and  
Occupation**  
by Habib Siddiqui  
18/07/2025



**A Localism  
Manifesto**  
by Michael Shuman  
18/07/2025



**New attack  
reaffirms Gaza  
Humanitarian  
Foundation's  
role in killing  
and starvation,  
underscores  
need to stop its  
operations**

Adivasi communities have their own rich spiritual traditions, complete with unique deities, rituals, and philosophical frameworks that predate and differ significantly from Hinduism. Their animistic beliefs, ancestor worship, and nature-centred spirituality represent independent religious traditions that deserve constitutional recognition and protection.

The attempt to subsume these diverse traditions under Hinduism serves political purposes but does violence to the integrity of indigenous spiritual systems. It facilitates the appropriation of sacred sites, the imposition of alien religious practices, and the gradual erosion of authentic tribal identity.

Official recognition of Adivasi religions as distinct from Hinduism would not only provide legal protection for indigenous spiritual practices but also strengthen India's commitment to religious diversity and pluralism. This recognition should extend to the protection of sacred groves, traditional festivals, and indigenous priesthoods from external interference.

### **Self-Governance and Resource Control**

Central to civilizational justice for Adivasis is the recognition of their right to political autonomy. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Indian Constitution provide frameworks for tribal self-governance, but these have been inadequately implemented and often undermined by state and central government interference.

True political autonomy requires the devolution of meaningful decision-making powers to tribal councils and traditional institutions. This includes the right to accept or reject development projects, control over natural resources in tribal territories, and the authority to preserve and promote indigenous languages and cultures.

The principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), recognized in international law through the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, must be strictly implemented in all decisions affecting tribal territories. Nothing should be done in Adivasi areas without the explicit permission of their own institutions.

Furthermore, Adivasi communities must have full control over the vast natural resources in their territories. Studies show that tribal areas contain 80% of India's coal reserves, 60% of its iron ore, and significant deposits of other minerals. The wealth generated from these resources should primarily benefit the communities who have protected these lands for centuries, not external corporations or government coffers.

### **Redressing Historical Wrongs**

The displacement and destruction of Adivasi lives and territories since Independence alone demands massive compensation, not to mention the centuries of earlier injustices. The Government of India should establish a special Commission to estimate the costs of displacement, environmental destruction, and cultural loss suffered by tribal communities.

This compensation should include:

- Land restoration where possible
- Financial compensation for irreversible losses

by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor  
18/07/2025

**UN report documents Israel's relentless destruction of Palestinian education and culture**



by Sandy English  
18/07/2025

**Superman Isn't About Gaza— But It Sure Feels Like It**



by Medea Benjamin  
18/07/2025

**Pandemic Explosion: Silently Genociding Gaza's Next Generation**



by Yasmin Abu Shammala  
18/07/2025

**Shackled and Unbowed: How Georges Ibrahim Abdallah Became A Universal Emblem of Resistance**



by Rima Najjar  
18/07/2025

**India's Animals Deserve Better: Time to Modernize Our Cruelty Laws**



by Milind Deshpande  
18/07/2025

**If Palestinians are expelled from Gaza on a large-scale, this will destroy justice and trust in international relations**



by Bharat Dogra  
17/07/2025

**An Evening with Chinese Comrades in London**



- Investment in tribal education and healthcare systems
- Support for the preservation and promotion of indigenous languages and cultures
- Guaranteed employment and livelihood opportunities in tribal areas

The compensation framework should be designed and implemented in consultation with tribal communities themselves, ensuring that it addresses their priorities and needs rather than imposing external solutions.

### Reclaiming India's Soul

The restoration of Adivasi centrality to Indian civilization is not just a matter of justice for indigenous peoples; it is essential for the survival and flourishing of the entire subcontinent. In an era of climate change, resource depletion, and social fragmentation, the wisdom of those who have lived sustainably for millennia offers our best hope for a viable future.

By placing the Adivasis at the centre of its story, India will not be diminishing its other histories, but will finally be making its own history whole. Mustering the courage, wisdom and humility to do justice to the Adivasi people will not only determine their fate, but the soul of the nation itself.

### Subscribe to Our Newsletter

Get the latest CounterCurrents updates delivered straight to your inbox.

Name

E-mail

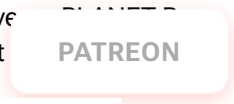
Join Our Newsletter

**Satya Sagar is a journalist and public health worker who can be reached at [sagarnama@gmail.com](mailto:sagarnama@gmail.com)**

**Tags:** [Adivasi](#), [Adivasi Land Rights](#), [Satya Sagar](#)

### Support Countercurrents

Countercurrents is answerable only to our readers. Support honest journalism because we have

Become a Patron at 

Subscribe Now

### Join Our Newsletter

GET COUNTERCURRENTS DAILY NEWSLETTER STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX



by Bhabani Shankar Nayak  
17/07/2025



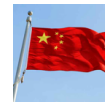
**Fragmenting a Nation: Israel's Enduring Pursuit of Palestinian Disunity**  
by Dr Ramzy Baroud  
17/07/2025



**"Diplomatic" Communication: Is it really diplomatic?**  
by Nilofar Suhrawardy  
17/07/2025



**What the US Court's Anti-LGBT+ Curriculum Ruling Reveals About India's Silent Schools**  
by Disha  
17/07/2025



**Revolutionary Third World Leaders Praise China's World Role**  
by Stansfield Smith  
17/07/2025



**Israel Strikes Catholic Church in Gaza, Killing three and Injuring Others**  
by Quds News Network  
17/07/2025



**Bombing Damascus**  
by Awni Rjoub  
17/07/2025



**80 Years After Trinity: Why Was There So Little Dissent at Los Alamos and What Does It Mean Today?**  
by Eric Ross  
17/07/2025



**What It Means to Police a Democracy**  
by Ashish Singh  
17/07/2025

**India's BRICS**