



# Indigenous People and Biodiversity Conservation in India: Scrutinizing a Symbiotic Relationship

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**Abstract.** The world is going through an unprecedented time and confronting with a planetary emergency of nature loss, changes in biodiversity, climate, rising pollutions and erosion of ecosystem. It causes conflicts between human and biodiversity, insecurity of food and health, inequality in sharing of resources, economy and rising of zoonotic diseases in the 21st century. It is affecting about 370 million indigenous people in 87 countries worldwide, have been depending on nature since generations for their source of life and livelihood. It is believed that nature, indigenous people and biodiversity are closely connected with each other and inseparable part since time immemorial. The indigenous people are associated deeply for protecting the nature and biodiversity and separating them in the name of industrialization and development will manifest an ecological imbalance. However, in the name of development and societal progress, State and other private agencies exploiting the nature, biodiversity, and natural resources and invited a man-made conflict between the development agencies, State and the indigenous people. This conflict has deprived a large number of indigenous people from their entitlement of forest rights and right to livelihood, that pushed them into the misery, injustice and despair. This scenario resulted in environmental and biodiversity crises not only for the indigenous community alone but also for the entire humanity. Hence, it is indispensable to rebuild the eroded ecosystem of biodiversity and support the indigenous people for preservation, conservation, and restoration of biodiversity for a healthy planet, for a better future, and for a sustainable world.

**Keywords:** Biodiversity, indigenous people, conservation, ecosystem and sustainable development

## 1 Introduction

In recent times, biodiversity has been declining in an alarming rate both globally as well as at the country level in India (Tiya Singh, 2023; and Sanjoy Kumar, 2001). Tribal communities in India have been confronting tremendous threats to protect their own land and resources. Some of the challenges consist of deforestation, mining and climate change impact, exclusionary policies and inadequate recognition and protection of their rights. It is the need of the hour to think about how to protect, and conserve the environment and develop a balanced ecosystem from the scourge of global warming and climate change. In this context, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides an opportunity to meet challenges and ensure that indigenous people are not neglected in achieving the sustainable future (Sadaan Ahmad Khan and Tejas Pande, 2023). The sustainable development is a strategical measure for the development of the people of today and tomorrow based on the principle of “vasudhaiva kutumbakam-the whole world is one family” and focusing on economic and social development of the global citizens without any detriment to the nature, natural resources, and natural environment (Nandan Nawn, Sudha Vasan, Kamal Bawa, 2020). So, there is a need to think about the future and it cannot be compromised and neglected. We owe the responsibility for our future generations while thinking for the present generation today. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on restoration, protection, and conservation of biodiversity and terrestrial ecosystems in this earth (SDG-15). In this regard, the efforts and action taken by the global leaders, head of the nations, policy makers and civil society organizations through implementation of SDGs will certainly benefit immensely in reducing the impact of disasters occurring around the globe as an effect of climate change (SDG-13) and will also help in eradicating poverty (SDG-1), providing food security (SDG-2), and providing an alternative livelihood and securing economic growth (SDG-8) of today and in the future. In the era of sustainable development, indigenous people occupy a pivotal position for protection and conservation of the environment and India’s rich biodiversity.

The present paper focuses on the significant role of indigenous communities in preservation, conservation, restoration, and protection of the environment and biodiversity in India. It highlights the different Constitutional provisions, legal regulations, and policies prescribed and implemented in India for protection of the Mother Earth. It also enumerates various case laws related to environment, ecology and biodiversity for the wider interest of the readers.

## 2 Genesis for Conservation of Nature and Biodiversity: An Indian Perspective

In India, the Puranas, Vedas, Upanishads, and our other holy scriptures of Sanatan Dharma described the portrayal of plants, trees, wild life and also, its significance to the people and particularly described how the indigenous people worship all elements of the earth. The Rig Veda emphasized the importance of the Mother Earth in

managing the nature, climate, biodiversity, and contribution for development of human life by highlighting the close relationship with the earth/nature. The Atharva Veda considers plants/forests as the abode of different Gods and Goddesses whereas the Yajur Veda emphasizes the deeper connection between forest/nature and animals by focusing the mutual respect and kindness of human with the nature and the animal world. It is to notice, since the beginning the human civilization in India has been depending and protecting the nature and natural environment for their survival and sustainable development. Hence, human's relation with the nature is primeval and inseparable. In ancient India, people worshipped the different elements and forces of nature including plants, trees, and animals. This is how the Nature (Prakriti) is manifested in five forms of Panchmahabhut (Prithivi or Earth, Agni or Fire, Jal or Water, Akash or Sky, Vayu or Wind) and all of them were worshipped in our country. India has a rich heritage that shows deep reverence towards the environment and environmental jurisprudence indicates the preservation and conservation of nature and biodiversity emanated from sacred books and spiritual teachings. Mahavira, Gautama Buddha, Prophet Mohammad and Jesus Christ had all similar spiritual thoughts of compassion, harmony and love towards the nature and emphasized the relations between man and environment. In this context, there are different views by different religious communities. It is also further noticed from the ancient people of Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Dravidian civilization; they maintained a balance with the ecosystem and established the harmonical relationship with the nature. It indicates, all religious groups and the people of ancient times have deeply connected with the nature and natural environment and developed a harmonious ecosystem. In the similar way, indigenous people in India were also deeply engaged in preservation, and protection of the ecosystem.

Indigenous communities depend on nature and biodiversity for their sustenance wherever they setup their habitant. The contribution of biodiversity for the growth and development of indigenous people and vice-versa is immense: be it agriculture, bio-pesticides, fodder, forest products and fuel that provides a support system of indigenous community for sustainable development. Hence, it is important to protect biodiversity and maintain an ecological balance. It is believed that our Mother Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago and this world has seen the first life 4 million years ago by the simple process of unicellular bacterial cells. The German geologist, geophysicist and meteorologist - Alfred Wegener explained in 1912 that the different continents were seen today are the result of continuous evolvement (continental drift theory) process of geological activities of the earth and organic evolution in the biosphere. India is considered as one of the seventeen mega biodiversity countries around the globe and it occupies about eight percent of the globe's registered species and out of 34 world's biodiversity hotspots, India has four biodiversity hotspots. Along with 1.4 billion population, India is a home to 96,000 types of species of various animals and 47,000 types of species of different plants including almost half of aquatic plants worldwide.

### **3 Role of Indigenous People for Conservation of Biodiversity in India**

The onset of industry, the rise of urbanization, and commercialization has had a detrimental effect on the natural world and diversity and pose a danger to life. Since the indigenous people not only depend on Mother Earth and biodiversity for their daily survival, and livelihood, but also for overall spiritual, ethnic, and physical well-being, they are directly and immediately affected by the adverse outcomes of economic growth and declining biodiversity. The survival of indigenous people is intrinsically tied to the status of biodiversity (Sobrevila C. 2008). Indigenous people (called Tribals/Adivasis/Aboriginal communities in India) have resided over 15% of geography, constitute an estimated population of 104 million (8.6%) out of the total population in India. People of indigenous descent had an extensive record of leveraging resources from the environment, and they are quite knowledgeable about the intricate natural systems that flourish within their respective societies. In indigenous culture, this knowledge (Eugenia Recio and Dina Hestad, 2022) has accumulated over several generations and been transmitted through the generations from father to son. The indigenous people have implemented numerous changes to the regional terrain to increase its variability and several have revived the biodiversity in devastated areas. They created their own customary ways for biodiversity rejuvenation and preservation by means of experimentation and failure throughout history, and subsequent execution and adoption of these methods have contributed to the preservation of biodiversity even today. In India, there are several instances involving indigenous and tribal communities that have contributed to biodiversity preservation and conservation. The Kuming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework-2022 (GBF-2022) has been accepted widely at the global levels which were developed from the Conference Parties (COP15) in last year that focuses on various rights of local communities and indigenous people and considered as the custodian and friend of nature and biodiversity for conservation, preservation, restoration and sustainable use. However, the Indian indigenous people had initiated for protection of biodiversity a long years before.

The Western Ghats is recognized as one of the ten rich biodiversity hot spots at the global level and known as world heritage site that traverse through six Indian States namely Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala and Gujarat stretching to a length of 1609 kilometers, spreading 1,40,000 square kilometers with average height of 900 meters along with South West Coast of Indian Peninsula. It covers wide range of natural environment including mountains, green hills, dense forests, grass lands, igloos and solas and species of 5000 flowering plant, 508 birds, 139 mammals, 179 amphibian species in the Western Ghat regions including so many unidentified rare species which symbolizes a separate and unique identity of Western Ghats. The different indigenous people residing in the Western Ghats takes the prime responsibility for conservation and protecting the biodiversity and maintaining an ecological balance in entire Western Ghats regions (M. Balasubramanian, Kamaljit K. Sangha, 2021; Dhanya Vijayan and et.al, 2021).

In 1982, the tribal community of the Singhbhum district, Bihar protested (Jungle Bachao Andholan) and protected the natural Sal Forest against the government's decision to plant teak trees by cutting down the natural Sal trees in the forest. Similarly in 1973, the Chipko movement led by Sundarlal Bahuguna successfully protected trees/forests of the Himalayan slopes from the greedy contractors. Another initiative by the Kutia Kondh as well as Dongria Kondh Tribes in the Niyamgiri hills of Odisha, believe that two hundred Sq.km area is the residence of dominant God and ancestor of kin Niyamraja, who has been worshipped by the local indigenous people for safeguarding and protecting of Niyamgiri, the mountains. They revere the Niyamraja and regard the mountains, trees, foliage, and river as their deities. Unfortunately, the projected plan by Vedanta Resources Limited to harvest 83 million metric tons of bauxite from the surrounding mountains has put the region in danger. The Apex Court of India given the direction to the Gram Sabha, which are the Local Councils of the 12 Dongria Kondh villages with the greatest mining influence to reject Vedanta's mining project in April 2013. This action was taken to make sure that various provisions enumerated under the Forest Rights Act-2006 protecting the tribal rights were followed in true spirit. One of the major factors of the region is that biodiversity is thought to be Dongria Kondh's maintenance of the landscape and natural resources. By successfully blocking the coal mining project, the Niyamgiri Movement contributed to the preservation of the Dongria Kondhs' historical and ecological heritage along with the protection of forests (Borde R. and Bluemling B. 2022). Hence, the tribal and indigenous populations have forged a healthy relationship with the environment and preserved its abundant biodiversity and resources found within nature by identifying nature with numerous Deities and spiritual and artistic activities.

In another case, the Kadar tribe belongs to one of the ancient indigenous groups of Southern Western Ghats region and has been identified as a particularly vulnerable tribal group in the Southern Western Ghats of Athirappilly-Vazhachal-Nelliampathy forests of Kerala in India which is declared as a reserve of rainforests. The riparian woodlands consisting of 28.5 hectares which support Kadar tribes for their existence would have been annihilated by the planned Athirappilly Hydroelectric River Project on the banks of the river Chalakudy. However, due to public pressure, the Government of Kerala was forced to withdraw the intended power project.

#### **4 Constitutional Provisions and Judicial Activism for Environmental Protection**

The first UN Conference held from 5-16 June, 1972 on Human Environment at Stockholm, (at Sweden's capital) declared that, "to protect and to promote the human environment needed for today and tomorrow of mankind". Therefore, UN invited different governments, and global leaders, people around the globe to seek common efforts for improvement, conservation, and preservation of the human world. This Conference further announced that "people across the globe have Fundamental Right to enjoy the freedom of equality and adequate decent conditions of life, in a

conducive environment of a quality that provide a dignified life". In this significant conference, twenty-six principles were resolved for the development of humanity. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of the largest democratic country of India had attended the Stockholm conference and her speech was loudly accepted by world leaders as she raised the voice for the cause of the environment. Since then, India as a Member of the Stockholm Declaration, has adopted many international policies and passed various national laws and Statues for development and protection of the environment. India takes the pride as world's first nation to pass a historic Amendment of the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act-1976 which incorporated two important Articles namely Article - 48A and Article - 51-A(g). Both Articles focus on the improvement and protection of the environment. Article-353 of the Indian Constitution has given unique special power to the Parliament to formulate policies in the matters related to implementation of policies suggested by the international governing bodies for the welfare of national government. As a result, the Parliament had passed the environment policy named as Environment Protection Act 1986. The Apex Court of India also noticed from Stockholm Declaration and over the period of time carefully watching the legislations made by the Government of India for preservation, protection, and improvement of biodiversity and environment. Further, the Constitution of India introduced the following changes in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

Article 48-A focuses on the improvement and protection of the nature, natural forests, and wildlife. The State is expected to take necessary initiatives to improve, preserve and protect the biodiversity and environment including protection of natural forests, and wildlife. The Article 51-A focuses on Fundamental Duties that explicitly directs: it is the responsibility of each citizen (g) to develop and protect the biodiversity and environment particularly river, lake wildlife, and forests, and to be concerned for both living and non-living elements in the environment. The Constitution in the 7th Schedule: List III, and Concurrent List added in Article-17(A), Forests and 17(B) protections of the wildlife, and give emphasis for a balanced ecosystem. In view of different provisions enshrined in the Indian Constitution and some other statutory provisions mentioned in different laws with relates to protection of the environment, the Apex Court in India has focused on some important features of "Sustainable Development" relating to the environment such as the "Polluter Pays Principles", the "Precautionary Principles", the "Intergenerational Equity Principle" the "Absolute Liability Principle", the Public Trust Doctrine" and the "Reversal of Burden of Proof" are wider part of the environmental laws in India but the same were not implemented effectively.

The Constitution of India, Part-XI empowers both Centre and State Governments to be engaged in legislative relations. At the same time, it also obligates the "States" and "Citizens" to think how to protect, preserve and improve the biodiversity and environment. The Concurrent List-III of the Constitution (Schedule VII) also gives power to the Constitution to enact the appropriate laws related to the environment subjects such as forests, protection of nature, wildlife, birds, minerals and mine's development. It has been directed that the Parliament can exercise its power on these subjects. The various parts of the Indian Constitution focus on how to

take all precautionary measures for protection and promotion of the environment for sustainable development.

The word “indigenous people/community” is not mentioned directly in the Indian Constitution. However, the indigenous people can be identified by a variety of identities in India, in the name of Adivasis/Tribals in the Constitution. The Article-342 of the Constitution mentioned tribes or tribal communities. The oversight and operation of Scheduled Territories and Scheduled Tribal Communities in every State except North Eastern States is governed by the 5th Schedule of the Constitution. In North Eastern States, where the 5th Schedule is not applicable, the 6th Schedule protects indigenous issues. The National Commission for SCs and STs, which was formed by the Central Government under Article 338-A of 89th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 focuses on all key issues impacting Scheduled Tribes. Additionally, by designating the Ministry for Tribal Welfare in every State to manage indigenous well-being, Article 164(1) offers a unique safeguard for members of tribal communities.

In this context, the Preamble of the Indian Constitution emphasized that India has adopted “Socialistic” principles and focuses on “Socialistic” principles of Indian society. In this context, the role of the provincial State is significant and gives emphasis to the societal issues and challenges. The main objective of socialism is to ensure “a decent and dignified standard of life to every individual including a pollution free healthy environment where the State has a major role to play to ensure a healthy environment and establish a just social order. The Part-IV (Prime Minister of India) of the Indian Constitution, focuses such responsibility of the State under Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). The other significant aspects of human life i.e., liberty, equality, and justice have also been reflected in the Constitution and placed in Part-III dealing with the Fundamental Rights for the citizens. The Part IV-A which deals with the Article 51-A (g), Article 51-A (j) of Fundamental Duties also focuses on the preservation, protection, and conservation of the nature, environment and biodiversity.

#### **4.1 A Directive Principle of State Policy**

The DPSP (mentioned under Part-IV of the Constitution) represents how to achieve the socio-economic objectives where the State is expected to implement different developmental policies for the welfare of the citizens. The DPSPs are designed in such a way that it will guide the State by emphasizing three functions of the government i.e. legislative, executive and judiciary by following various provisions enshrined in the Constitution. The Article-47 of DPSP says that the State has to ensure for raising the nutritional level and the decent facilities for living of its own people and providing good health care provision as one of its’ prime responsibilities. The Article 48-A deals with improvement and protection of the environment. It focuses on role of the provincial State, which will protect, improve and promote the biodiversity and environment and also safeguard the wildlife and forests. The various provisions mentioned under DPSP are very fundamental in administration and

governance process of each State and they are being basic rule of the country and it needs to be implemented.

## 4.2 Fundamental Rights

The Principle-1 of the Stockholm Declaration has been reflected in the Indian Constitution under Article-14 (Right to Equality), Article-19 (Right to Freedom of Expression) and Article-21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty). It is believed that provisions mentioned and discussed in Part-II and Part-IV of the Constitution focuses vividly about the Fundamental Rights and DPSP which are both complementary and supplementary to each other. There are various unenumerated in Part-III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution. Environment improvement and protection is one of them that has been protected under various provisions of Indian judiciary and became impetus to the human rights approach for the improvement of nature and environment and biodiversity. Article-21 gives fundamental priority for Right to life and personal liberty to all its citizens is believed to be the heart and soul of human rights of the individual and has conceived and provides a wide horizon of its meaning from different illustrations of judicial proceedings and therefore no justification is required why a healthy environment is needed to lead a good life and it is one of the basic rights of the individual. For a healthy and dignified life there is need for preservation and conservation of the essential ingredients of sources of life including a stable environment. Article-21 provides and protects the human rights as fundamental to individual's life to live in a free of danger of diseases or infection and within a proper environment. This is also an obligation of individuals to preserve and protect the species those becoming extinct. It is the responsibility of each provincial Indian State to take necessary steps for preservation, conservation and protection of environment that is an inseparable part of individual's right to life. So, it indicates there is a good relation between human life and the environment. There is no meaning of Fundamental Rights if citizens are not enjoying the healthy environment. Right to live in a conducive environment, and right to availing good health, is an essential component for a healthy society that has been guaranteed in the Article 21 as stated in the Indian Constitution and it is considered as the sanctum sanctorum of human rights.

The Apex Court of country in *N.D Jayal v. Union of India*, has given a broad view of right to life. It says right to have healthy environment is a basic and fundamental aspect to right to development is a prerequisite element of an individual's progress in the society. The sustainable development is significant for a symbiotic balance between the right to environment and right to development. So, it is an integral and inseparable part of human rights as enumerated in Article-21. Therefore, right to holistic development is an important part of the individual that encompasses much more than economic well-being and it has been guaranteed under the Fundamental Rights. In the case of *Hinch Lal Tiwari v. Kamla Devi*, the Apex Court of India said that materials resources of like forests, hillocks, ponds, mountains, and tanks, etc. are the gift of the Mother Earth. They create an ecological balance. Their proper protection is important for a healthy environment that provides various



opportunities to people to celebrate quality of life which is also guaranteed under Article-21. The court pronounced that nobody can use common pond's land for residential purposes.

### 4.3 Judicial Pronouncements for Protection of Rights of Indigenous People

The judiciary has prescribed clearly many sections in the Constitution an adaptable interpretation in order to defend the basic rights of the India's indigenous people and to incorporate them in efforts to preserve nature and the general welfare of society. The Article-21 provides a wide range of rights required to maintain a life with full dignity. According to the Apex Court of the country, the phrase "right to life" refers to a life with dignity for humanity, not only having an existence as an animal. (Francis Coralie v. Union of India). In this context, it is said, indigenous tribes have freedom to live in the circumstances that protect fundamental human dignity, including their entitlement not to be displaced/rendered as a consequence of actions which violate customary privileges. The Supreme Court issued stringent rules in 1987 to safeguard indigenous people who suffered from being driven off their forest lands by the *NTPC's Rihand thermal plant case*. According to the Tribunal, indigenous people have spent time gathering their daily needs in the forest since many decades, and eliminating them will be regarded as equivalent to denying their basic rights for survival, implying right to subsistence. The Apex Court of India placed additional emphasis for recovery and integration into society at large in the case of *Banwasi Sewa Ashram Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh, India*.

All efforts are to be made to preserve and protect the environment. The Andhra Pradesh High Court implemented the "preventive postulates" in *Bheemagiri Bhaskar v. Revenue Divisional Officer, Bhongir* [A.I.R. 2001 A.P. 492 at 498-499.], and stated that allowing of quarrying authorizations, for the raising of sandy material, which at first represents a small mineral content could be obtained in accordance with the rules and regulations of Mining and Minerals in general (*Regulation and Development) Act, 1957* nevertheless no license shall be granted whenever the similar thing draws in the scorn in Article 21 Indian Constitution. The lush regions will turn worthless due to shortages in water if the unregulated mining and removal of sediment from the bottoms of rivers will be allowed it to continue, endangering the existence of people who solely rely upon agriculture.

### 4.4 Environmental Legislation in India

There are plenty of laws have been passed to address different ecological and environmental issues, and to safeguard the natural world. However, the degree to which these laws consider indigenous people's contribution to the preservation of biodiversity is a crucial factor.

#### 4.4.1 The Indian Forest Act, (1927):

It is an imperial legal system in India. Despite the fact that it calls for the creation of local forests, it merely refers to the situations where communities may be supplied

with wood, additional forest products, or grassland. As a result of which, the involvement of communities of native people in conservation is not taken into account. Additionally, de-reservations of any reserved woods for non-forest purposes must receive prior clearance from the national/federal government under the terms of the Forest Conservation Act-1980. The indigenous peoples' contributions to biodiversity protection are not taken into account in the above-stated act, likewise, "Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996," PESA-Act, No.40 of 1996, passed on 24th day of December 1996 is a law allowing for the furtherance of the rules of Part IX of our Constitution concerning local-self-governments to scheduled regions with certain limitations and adaptations. The aim is to guarantee autonomous government for residents of India's designated regions through customary Gram Sabha. The objective is to give the Gram Sabha and local-self-governments the authority to establish a system of independence over things like local organizations, tiny forest products, smaller minerals, little water bodies, and typical resources. The above said Act was passed by the Parliament of India in 1996, and it became effective from December 24, 1996 onwards. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment-1992 established the Local-Self Panchayati Raj Institution which aimed to promote local self-governance in rural India. One of the significant aspects of PESA-Act, 1996 strengthened the Gram Sabha, or governing body, has the authority to uphold and protect indigenous practices, customs, and culture as well as to adopt schemes, initiatives, and strategies. The Gram Sabha is recognized by PESA as the official expression of the community people to have the power to "secure preserve the community's customs and behaviors, their sense of cultural belonging, social assets, and their traditional manner of conflict management". PESA Act, Section 4 (d), 1996 because of the Gram Sabha has greater authority in the self-government framework under the PESA Act, since the Gram Sabha is composed of the same type of people that signifies, the aforementioned clause has become well-liked. Therefore, it seeks to facilitate tribal autonomous rule as well as individual participation in the overall development and protection of the ecosystem.

#### **4.4.2 The Biological Diversity Act, 2002**

This was passed in year 2002 for the first time in the nation's history with the intention of giving biodiversity legal protection. Anticipation and worries were divided in people's reactions to the Act. The Biological Diversity Act of 2002 acknowledges indigenous knowledge to a certain point. The National Government needs to take action to uphold and safeguard (The Biological Diversity Act of 2002 (Section 36)). It recommends that regional individual biological diversity knowledge be protected by means of a variety of initiatives, including enrollment of this information at provincial, State, and at the national levels as well as additional safeguard instruments like a Sui Generis System. However, the Act does not include enough provisions for including indigenous and local communities in the preservation of biodiversity, and the Local Biodiversity Management Committees lack the ability to acknowledge such customary procedures.

The scheduled tribe groups of forest dwellers under Recognition of Forest Rights Act-2006 attempted to modify different past injustices suffered by the forest dwellers have experienced for almost 50 years and to give them the safety of time over agricultural land for farming and living by means of individual freedoms. Additionally, it grants communities that live near forests, the power to protect, restore, care, and handle any local forest resources that they have in the past safeguarded and kept for future use. The Forest Rights Act is clause for establishing crucial endangered habitats within reserved regions, however, it has generated controversy because it is thought that this clause may result in the displacement and removal of forest residents from the forested areas. The Forest Rights Act is essential for safeguarding the rights of a billion indigenous people and other forest dwellers across the nation, as well as for achieving the goals of biodiversity conservation, which can only be accomplished by including (and not excluding) these individuals from protection policies and plans. To ensure ecological balance, the Government of India, through the National Mission on Bio-diversity and Human Well-being focuses to integrate the entire biodiversity and the ecosystem with agriculture, climate change, bio-economy, health and develop the capacity building in the needy areas and stakeholders of biodiversity science. The Mission with its six goals, aims to converge and develop an explicit synergy between research work with national policy initiatives, and its execution for an effective and efficient management of environment and biodiversity based on ideas of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

## 5 Conclusion

Indigenous people maintain a balance with the ecosystem and the cultural diversity in this world. India currently possesses a significant amount of biodiversity. The conservation of biodiversity has benefited from the work of indigenous people. However, the lightning-fast industrial transformation has alienated the native and indigenous people from the preservation of biodiversity. Native people's contributions to biodiversity conservation are not fully addressed by the current local laws governing environmental protection and the conservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, the laws and policies use a variety of approaches. The tribal and indigenous population is deprived of their rights and biodiversity is impacted by the exclusion of the indigenous people from advancement and protection of biodiversity. Therefore, national and international efforts ought to be made to incorporate indigenous communities and community's knowledge for the protection of local ecology and biodiversity. Furthermore, countries must create an online record of the numerous ancient methods for conserving biodiversity. Inspection panels can be established at various levels: global, national, regional, and community to track the participation of indigenous people in preserving of nature and biodiversity. In order to create a robust network for tracking and legal compliance these panels must coordinate as well. It is necessary to improve laws and regulations by boosting penalties and monetary penalties for unlawful destruction of forests and. Additionally,

State and other development agencies must be held accountable for harming the ecosystem by diverting forest property for development purposes, and the use of such areas must be curtailed. The Gram Sabha and Local Level Organizations must be reinforced and given the necessary resources in order to carry out multiple ecological preservation efforts and to involve the local tribal and native populations as beneficiaries of forestry rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 for a better sustainable world. It is necessary to stop government and industry intervention in local usage of resources.

The new initiatives of joint forest management, indigenous approach (people-place relationship), community-based institutions, cross sectoral integrated approach for the management of natural resources combined with right-based approach can paved the way for protection of biodiversity and catapulting preservation and conservation trajectory of India in the contemporary times. It is crucial to increase the native and locals in the neighborhood's livelihood security because they reside close to forested regions. It is also important that due to their knowledge of the ecosystem and sincere care for forest protection, they may be hired as guards, guides for trips, etc. There are a lot of changes and transformation taking place worldwide due to climate change and global warming including the recent ongoing conflicts of wars and crimes between countries. Therefore, at present the entire humanity is in a crossroad with a lot of uncertainties and confusion of sustainability of humanity. It enforces us to think about the sustainable development and how to lead a better life tomorrow by fulfilling the present requirements without failing our duties for our future generations and for a better sustainable world.

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