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CTD: 14EH – EQUITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE  
SUB-DOMAIN: MARGINAL AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

## PANEL TITLE: ISSUES OF DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TODAY

CONVENOR – PROF. RAJKISHOR MEHER  
CO-CONVENOR- PROF. BISWAJIT GHOSH  
DISCUSSANT: DR. RABINDRA GARADA

### ABSTRACT

Development of the marginalized indigenous people of India is a cherished goal of the Indian government since 1947. Along with formal plans and programmes, we also witnessed the formation of several commissions, committees, working groups, study teams from time to time to evaluate the condition and development problems of these people. Yet, the results are not promising. Often, the failures are erroneously attributed to factors inherent in the traditional socio-economic structure and cultural system of the people. But empirical research and numerous ethnographic studies have shown that in most cases implementation at the ground level is tardy, structural limitations have also resulted in its slow realisation. The state induced policies of industrialization and development that have drastically altered the relationship of tribes with the natural environment and the resources lying therein viz. land, forest, mineral and other natural resources. This has made them 'victims of development' and many have become 'ecological refugees'. Globalisation has only expedited their exclusion. Limitations of the development induced displacement policies of the Indian state also reflect failure in our approach. Often, the state is not altering the 'basic structure of exploitation' though it spends huge money to 'develop' Naxalite affected areas. All these have led to a new process of 'development of underdevelopment' of tribal regions. As a corollary, the cultural heritage and communitarian life of the tribals are adversely affected by now. Hence, a great deal of indignation has been shown towards such projects. Often, ethnic nationalism and ethnic conflicts result in such a condition. The resistance against such projects not only pose a critique of development but also a justification for people-centric alternate development. It is now felt that if we expect plans and strategies of tribal development to be more effective, these programmes and schemes should be evolved in consonance with the ecology, social organisation, and cultural values of the tribal people. This panel would provide a platform to share the findings of research from different parts of the country. Panel proposes to explore possible alternative pathways to ensure protection of traditional heritage along with a better quality of life.

**Keywords:** Indigenous people, development, impoverishment, displacement, protest movement.

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