

Major Tribes of Rajasthan and Their Economy

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Rajasthan is one of the significant states of India where many tribal live. After, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Gujarat, Rajasthan have highest population of the tribal communities. According to the census 2001, the total population of tribes living in India is 96,94,462, in which 50,67,679 male and 46,26,783 are female.

to a detailed discussion of only the major ones from amongst them.

1) Meena :

Meena constitute the major bulk of the tribal population of Rajasthan. About 51.20percentage of the total population of the Meena tribe is concentrated in

District wise Main Tribes in Rajasthan

Tribes Name	Per cent	Districts
Meena	49.03	Chittorgarh, Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Dausa, Sawai-Madhopur, Karauli, Jaipur.
Saharia	46.01	Baran, Kota, Jhalawar, Udaipur, Ajmer (Kishangarh)
Bheel	1.67	Banswara, Dungarpur
Garasia	0.86	Udaipur, Dungarpur, Sirohi and Pali mainly in Sirohi Districts road

Source:- Census of Rajasthan, 2001.

* Geographical Distribution of Tribes :

The tribes of Rajasthan are distributed in the following three geographical zones :

1. South-eastern zone :

This zone includes the districts of Alwar, Bhartpur, Dholpur, Jaipur, SawaiMadhopur, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Tonk, Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar and some parts of Chittorgarh, Udaipur and Sirohi districts. 46.06percentage of the total tribal population of the state is settled in this zone. BheelMeena and Seharria are the Chief tribes which are found in this zone.

2. Southern Zone :

This southern zone includes the districts of Banswara, Dungarpur and Udaipur in which 43.80percentage of the total tribal population of Rajasthan is settled. Bheel, Meena, Garasia and Damor are the tribes that are found in this zone.

3. Western Zone :

This zone includes Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Churu, Ganganagar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Nagpur, Jodhpur, Pali, Barmer and Jalore districts of Rajasthan. Thus, 7.14percentage of the total tribal population of the state reside in the eleven districts falling in the dry and semi-dry zone of Rajasthan. The tribal population of this zone is mostly comprised of the Bheel and the Meena tribes. About 96 percent of the total tribal population of Rajasthan belong to rural areas while only 4 percent of them are urbanites.

* Major Tribes of Rajasthan:

Although many tribes are found in different parts of Rajasthan but we shall concentrate ourselves

the three districts of Jaipur, SawaiMadhopur and Udaipur while the rest of them are settled in Alwar, Chittorgarh, Kota, Bundi and Dungarpur districts.

* The Economy of the Meena Tribe :

The Meena tribe is divided into two broad categories from the point of view of their different sources of livelihood viz. (I) Zamindar or Agriculturist and (II) The ChoukidarMeenas. The ZamindarMeenas, as the name indicate, earn their livelihood through agricultural activities and cattle breeding while the ChoukidarMeenas consider themselves to be of higher starts then the other section of the Meenas and are generally dreaded by the people for they are accomplished in committing theft, dacoity and other criminal activities. So much so that some of the Meenas belonging to the Chaukidar sect exclusively depend upon loot and arson However, the criminality and are gradually adhering themselves more and more to a law abiding life of peace and tranquility.

2) Bhil :

It is the second major tribe of Rajasthan. From the economic point of view the Bhils are stable agriculturists, a patriarchal tribe from the social view point and traditionally good archers. Presently this tribe is passing through different phases of development. The tribe is largely settled in the Bhilwara, Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Sirohi and Chittorgarh districts of Rajasthan. The Bhilwara region probably owes its name to the fact that it is largely inhabited by the people belonging to the Bhil tribe. Beside the said districts, the Bhils are also found in the hilly tracts and forests of the state.

* Bhil Economy :

Economically the Bhils are largely poverty stricken people. Hunger arising out of the lack of source of livelihood and the apathy of the administration towards their basic needs of life have forced most of them to a life of criminality.

Traditionally, the Bhil is a nomadic tribe but in recent times they have taken to a settled life of Agricultural activities in many parts of the state. According to one estimate about 86 percentage of the Bhils in the state are engaged in agriculture while 10 percentage work as farm labourers and the rest 4 percentage are employed in forestry, hunting activities. Two types of agriculture known as 'Chimata' and 'Dajia' are found among the Bhils.

3) Garasia :

Garasia is the third major tribe of Rajasthan after Meena and Bhil. This tribe is largely settled in the southern parts of Rajasthan. The thickest consolida-

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tion of the Garasias to the tune of to 56.63 percentage of their total population in the state is found in the district of Udaipur. The Garadsias, however, Constitute 6.70 percentage of the total tribal population of Rajasthan.

*** Economy of the Garasia Tribe :**

The Garasias reside in the uneven hilly tract of southern Rajasthan. Some of them are also settled in the southern parts of Mount Abu. The people belonging to this tribe mostly depend upon agriculture and cattle breeding for their subsistence. The Garasias by and large work as agriculture labourers and about 85 percentage of them are found occupied in agricultural activities. They However, take over one crop from their agricultural pursuits and for the rest of the gear they depend upon wood cutting cattle grazing, hunting and working as casual labourers for their subsistence.

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