

TRIBAL AND ADIVASI SUNDAY

8 AUGUST 2021

Theme: Leaving No One Behind
(1Cor 10:24)

Objectives of SC and ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989

1. To improve the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe.
2. To curb offences related to ill-behaviour against SCs and STs that break down their self esteem.
3. To curb denial of economic, democratic and social rights.
4. To protect them from social disability like denial of access to certain places, personal atrocities like forceful drinking, eating inedible food, injury, sexual exploitation etc.
5. To help them remain devoid of malicious prosecution, economic exploitation and political disabilities.
6. To deliver justice through proactive efforts, giving them a dignified life and eradicate suppression from the dominant castes.



National Council of Churches in India
Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi Concerns

FOREWORD

Greetings from the NCCI.

The National Council of Churches in India through its program for Dalit and Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns invites the NCCI constituents, every year, to observe the Tribal Advocacy Sunday on the Sunday closest to International Day for the World's Indigenous People. This year NCCI Tribal Sunday falls on August 8th 2021. This annual observance highlights the concerns of the tribal and Adivasi communities in the country who need accompaniment.

This year the theme for the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is about 'leaving no one behind'. We invite Churches and Ecumenical Council/ Organisations/ Agencies to observe this day in a way that symbolises this commitment.

We do hope and pray that together we will be able to advocate for prioritisation of the needs of indigenous people in making policies where required, enacting legislation where relevant and in the implementation of programs appropriate to the alleviation of the problems of all peoples of Tribal and Adivasi communities everywhere..

The Legacies of history, tradition and culture need to be protected against the onslaught of the 'development' lobby. The PESA Act and other such legislations are known to be empowering instruments for the affirmation of life of persons belonging to Tribal and Adivasi communities.

As we observe Tribal Sunday this year let us rededicate ourselves to address all concerns relevant to Tribal and Adivasi communities amidst us in the NCCI family and those such persons all around us.

There are several church workers like Fr. Stan Swamy and scores of community workers who are working on the affirmation of the human rights of Tribal and Adivasi communities. Let us salute their commitment and pray for their protection and that of all human rights defenders in this country and world over. May the observance of this year's Tribal and Adivasi Sunday inspire us to do something in the direction of what they all stand for.

Let's leave no one behind....

In solidarity,

Rev. Asir Ebenezer

General Secretary

National Council of Churches in India

INTRODUCTION

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was first pronounced by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1994. By resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed on 9 August every year. By following this UN day, on 17 September 2010, during the Annual General Body Meeting of National Council of Churches in India in Bangalore, for the first time announced observance of the NCCI-Tribal and Adivasi Sunday. NCCI, therefore, urges and requests constituent members to annually observe every Sunday closest to 9 August as **NCCI - Tribal and Adivasi Sunday** and the date to be marked in the Church calendar and dairy.

In order to have a better understanding of the life situation of the Tribal and Adivasi communities in India during this COVID pandemic and to have a common form of worship for this special Sunday, NCCI therefore brings out this Liturgy. Nevertheless, NCCI acknowledges that many churches do not follow a liturgical form of worship; still NCCI requests those churches to adopt the Liturgy suitable to their own tradition. At the same time, NCCI is also aware of the absence of Tribal and Adivasi communities in a few churches, yet NCCI requests all those churches to observe this special NCCI Tribal and Adivasi Sunday to show their solidarity to our fellow tribal and adivasi friends who are oppressed and marginalised in various ways. NCCI hope that the observance of this special NCCI Tribal and Adivasi Sunday will be an enriching one in our faith affirmation and for widening the horizon of our ecumenical Journey. Since 2011, Tribal and Adivasi Sunday has been celebrated in many parts of our country in sensitizing the local congregation on Tribal and Adivasi Concerns. We would like to thank for the enormous support we have received from the churches, dioceses, parishes and institutions in celebrating this special Sunday.

The theme for this year's Tribal and Adivasi Sunday is “*Leaving No One Behind (1 Cor. 10:24)*”. We take this opportunity to invite you to celebrate Tribal and Adivasi Sunday on 8 August 2021 in your church/local parish/institution in a creative way. Herewith we are sending you a special order of worship for the day. You may take the freedom to use the entire worship order and translate it in your vernacular language or adapt parts of it.

With regards,

In Christ,

Pradip Bansrior

Executive Secretary

Dalit and Tribal/ Adivasi Concerns

National Council of Churches in India

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Theme: Leaving No One Behind... (1 Corinthians 10:24)

(Suggested Text: Proverbs 3:27, Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2, 1 Peter 4:10, Matthew 25: 37-40)

PREPARATION

Please feel free to adapt this worship order as the Spirit leads you and in ways that are appropriate to your context. Since many tribal churches do not follow a formal liturgy, worship leaders are advised to creatively adapt the content and principles of the proposed worship order in your respective local settings.

INVOCATION

Traditional musical instruments such as the tambourine, flute, mandar, drum may be arranged. Tribal/Adivasi ways of chanting, singing, dancing and drumming can be made through an LCD Projector or enacted by different groups.

PROCESSION

Representatives of the congregation may go to the altar place of worship with Earthen pots filled with hot boiled rice, starch, fruits, grains, eggs, or anything that would signify Tribal and Adivasi community's relationship with creation.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, let us worship God who through Shiprah and Puah paved way for the liberation of Jacobs tribes.

Come let us worship Jesus, who existed, even before the created order as an Adivasi, in God.

Come Let us worship the Holy Spirit whose presence and communion leads us towards becoming Just beings.

All: We come together to celebrate life through the experiences of the Tribal and Adivasi communities. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

O, Creator God, you made the circle of life, that no one may be left behind; we have gathered together to remember your love and practice our faith in our respective contexts. Especially, as we observe this Special Sunday recognizing the needs and aspirations of the Tribal and Adivasi Communities, open our eyes to see the beauty of their cultures, traditions, food and their diverse lifestyle in the midst of struggles. Teach us to embrace the discomfort that comes from our diversity, and to celebrate the fact that we are unified, not through our sameness, but through the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Guide us in our discernment and help us to be ever faithful and true to your word. Amen.

HYMN/SONG: An appropriate Hymn/ Song can be sung

SCRIPTURE READING : Matthew 25:37-40

REFLECTION

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Mathew 25:37-40 (NRSV)

("Leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract")

"...High levels of inequality are generally associated with institutional instability, corruption, financial crises, increased crime and lack of access to justice, education and health services. For indigenous peoples, poverty and gross inequities tend to generate intense social tensions and conflicts... Indigenous peoples' right to participate in decision-making is a key component in achieving reconciliation between indigenous peoples and States..." (International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021)

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2021.html>

To be a Tribal/an Adivasi is something to be proud of and worth celebrating. It is intriguing for anyone associated with them and if given the chance, tribals/adivasis have a lot to teach its coexisting communities: Their homelands, the values they possess and practice, the wisdom they share, the social equity they promote through their lifestyle, the cooperative social norms, the commendable sense of aesthetics and ethos, the practice of the values for eco-lifestyle, the inborn humility, ...

However, the atrocities, persecutions, and struggles faced by Tribal and Adivasi communities are not uninformed or unfamiliar to us: Land alienation, youth migration, trafficking, autocratic decision-making, etc. This is an urgent reminder for us as the called-out ones to hold their hands and walk along with them and with their struggles, serving them in any way we could reach God's purpose in life for them.

This calls us to read Mathew 25:37-40 with a different approach: the demanding attention towards the instructions in the midst of a conversation between the astounded righteous and God. God works through people and we are to partner with Christ in God's mission and ministry for the redemption of the World. We see God when we serve whom God intends for us to serve. God is with us, living with us and in us. Through these verses (Mathew 25: 37-40) we see that God is not a remote God high above, but God is the Immanuel moving with us in our daily lives. With a keen sense of discernment, we just have to look at those in need of our service.

It brings us to the awareness that in this new normal of Covid19 pandemic we are living in now, a new system of new social bonds needs to emerge where one understands and identifies the socio-religious, cultural, political, and economic situation of the Tribals/Adivasis by attending to their need while listening to their voices, seeking their consent, creating dialogue, and including them in the decision making. One must not deny the

other's right to decision-making. We must always be reminded that to deny those in need is to deny God, and in the same way, to deny their voice is also denying God's voice.

On this day, let us not forget how God called us, how we were being helped in our distress, how our voices were heard, and how our hands were held by someone when we were in trouble. Let us be reminded that they saw God in us as they were called for us, and likewise, it is our duty to respond to the call for the Tribal/Adivasis and move forward by leaving no one behind.

This day also calls out for the Tribals and Adivasis to regenerate a new consciousness of thoughtful aggression and be assertive in our fight against injustice and oppression. A reminder to return to one's own root, join hands with Christ in God's mission and ministry, help one another to move forward by celebrating our rhythms of life and continuously live out our unique values to achieve God's purpose for Tribal/Adivasi's redemption

CONFESSION

Leader: We have gathered as people of God. Let us confess our shortcomings to the God of mercy.

All: God of love and mercy, we bow down before you in true humility. We confess that we have sinned against you by being negligent about the lives of our neighbors. We have turned blind eyes and ears to the Tribal and Adivasi communities when they cried out for help. Pardon us O God, for taking side with the destructive power and being silent to the injustices meted out to them. We should relate with creation like the way you relate with us, but in the name of development, we encouraged land mining in the habitat places, displacement of Tribals and Adivasis, enforced unlawful acts that are detrimental to human life, and the whole eco-system. We plead for your Grace upon us, as we open our eyes to such injustices. Grant us the courage to be vocal against anything that harms creation and your peoples as no one has the right to plunder their lives in any form. In and through our works for justice, we seek your mercy O God. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: *"For as high as the heavens are above, so great is God's steadfast love."* Therefore, be assured of God's forgiveness and sin no more. For the Lord who delivered the Hebrews out of Egypt takes side with the oppressed communities. Be 'Just' and kind with your neighbors, the Tribal and Adivasis, and do unto them, what God in Christ Jesus did for you. Amen

All: Thanks be to God.

ACT OF COMMITMENT

(Earthen pot, with hot boiled rice with starch, fruits, grains, egg, to be passed from person to person denoting the congregations' participation in the life experiences of the Tribal and Adivasi communities.)

Leader: As we partake in the struggles of the Tribal and Adivasi community lives symbolically, may we be renewed in our commitment to creating a 'Just' society for all communities who wrestle for their rights and survival.

Response: We as the church, pledge to pray and participate, and be the instrument of Peace and Justice for the Tribal and Adivasi communities.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Leader: We believe in God, a good and just God, Creator of the universe and all communities on Earth.

All: We believe that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God, and that everyone's dignity is derived from the dignity of God the *Adi-vasi*, and that we were to be messengers of hope, love, justice, and dignity in this world and shun the notions that ostracise, neglect, and turn a blind eye towards struggling communities especially the Tribal and Adivasi communities.

Leader: We believe in Jesus, the son of God, who takes side with the communities that are pushed to the margins.

All: We believe that Christ died for the sins of humanity like, patriarchy, casteism, racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other evil deeds and to give us abundant life here and now.

Leader: We believe in the Holy Spirit, who accompanies the Church and the entire creation on their journey.

All: It is the Spirit that helps us to understand the scriptures and makes manifest the revelation of God to humanity and creation in the past, present, and future.

Leader: We believe in the universal mission of God, where all the citizens of this earth have the right to claim the promises of land, the election, being the peoples of God in all its fullness.

All: We believe in the communion of God's peoples and the Church who pray and serve. Our mission is prophetic and we should walk the talk courageously, honestly, and lovingly. We await with hope in God for the Kin-dom of God to come here and now. Amen.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Leader: God of creation, we pray for the Tribal and Adivasi communities. We pray that they are treated with dignity and not be plundered by the greedy eyes of the multinational corporations along with the powers that take side with them. We pray that you grant them the strength to voice out for themselves and bring a revolution in which we all can be a part, in solidarity with creation and our neighbours. We pray for leaders of the nations, to have discernment and to act swiftly in undoing the harsh projects that hinder their lives. We pray that the support system and programmes of the government reach them in time. We pray also that the unjust and cruel displacement from their ancestors' land and their homes be stopped forever.

Response: *Siamtu Pathian, kan dilna ngaithla ang che (Mizo)*/ Creator God, hear our prayers.

Leader: God of the migrants, we pray for the many people in our country who are forced to leave their native habitats and move into unfamiliar places for many reasons; where they are

made vulnerable to the human deceits of cheating, rape, murder, and torture. We pray for their safety and for their livelihood. May you grant them their daily needs and be their comfort in their struggles for survival. Grant our leaders the sound mind to cater for the needs of the Migrants in their search for a better living.

Response: Hey Ponomosor, ella gorjing te ondore (Kharria) /Creator God, hear our prayers.

Leader: God of struggling communities, we pray for new social contracts where Indigenous people are able to execute their right to participate in the decision-making of every structure of the society. To help achieving pace and reconciliation between indigenous peoples and governing bodies. We pray that such social contracts combat the legacy of exclusion and marginalization affecting indigenous peoples — through their meaningful and effective participation and the obtainment of their free, prior and informed consent.

Response: Sisirjauic Isor, koejon anjomtaleme (Santali) /Creator God, hear our prayers.

Leader: We especially pray for the NCCI, its leaders, members, workers and every single individual involve in its ministry. May your Spirit continue to grant them the wisdom and knowledge to identify the needs and problems of the Tribal and Adivasi community and other marginalized groups in the society showing solidarity to them and helping the Churches in addressing them to instill in the hearts of the people, the hope for sense of belongingness, equality, justice, love and peace.

Response: Sirju Dharme, emhai bintin menna (Oraon) /Creator God, hear our prayers.

Leader: God our eternal Parent, we pray and commit all our supplications into your hand. Lead us to help in constructive building policies of the governance of the church and the nation. We pray that as a church we join hands to stand against the violence that is meted out to the people and communities around us. We pray for you guidance and strength to make the church inclusive and just as we join people advocating justice and inclusion. We ask all this in the name of the Lord our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN : An appropriate Hymn/ Song can be sung

BENEDICTION

May the love of God rest and transform every tribe and nations and eradicate all barriers that divide people group into gender, caste, creed, and colors and the grace of his son Jesus Christ abide in the heart of the faithful to forgive one another and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit guide us in seeking reconciliation and to leave resentment behind. Amen.

ORDER OF WORSHIP PREPARED BY:

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COVER POSTER IS DESIGNED BY:

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