

CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

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| In addition to facing discrimination due to their ethnicity, members of indigenous communities often belong to linguistic minorities, causing hardship in education, employment and everyday life. | Many lands once belonging to indigenous peoples have been encroached upon and settled by newcomers. With little legal protection, indigenous peoples can rarely recover the lands they traditionally occupied. | Indigenous communities are often situated in remote, rural areas, where they lack infrastructure and access to larger markets. | Traditional livelihoods in indigenous communities may depend upon plant and animal species and other parts of fragile ecosystems. Environmental damage therefore often most severely impacts their economies. |
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| Indigenous communities have also played a historically important role in environmental protection. | Land reform and property laws have restricted many nomadic indigenous groups, often making their traditional occupations untenable. | As they are often marginalised, even where they might constitute a national majority group, most indigenous and tribal peoples lack clout in national and even local government, and their interests and needs are often ignored by decision-makers. | Years of discrimination have cast many indigenous people into poverty, thus further damaging their chances at empowerment and opportunities to improve their situation. |