



WORLD POPULATION DAY – 11 JULY, 2011

SEVEN BILLION PEOPLE COUNTING ON EACH OTHER

A world of seven billion people is an achievement. Globally, people are living longer and healthier lives, and couples are choosing to have fewer children. But huge inequities persist and daunting challenges lie ahead. While many richer countries are now concerned about low fertility and ageing, the poorest nations struggle to meet the needs of rapidly growing populations. Gaps between rich and poor are growing. And more people than ever before are vulnerable to food insecurity, water shortages, and weather-related disasters.

Whether we can live together on a healthy planet will depend on the choices and decisions we make now. In a world of seven billion people, and counting, we need to count each other.

There are seven key messages in The World at 7 Billion campaign

1. Reducing poverty and inequality also slows population growth.
2. Unleashing the power of women and girls will accelerate progress.
3. The largest population of young people is changing our world and future.
4. Ensuring that every child is wanted and every childbirth safe leads to smaller and stronger families.
5. All seven billion of us, and those who follow, depend on the health of our planet.
6. Lower fertility and longer lives add up to an unprecedented challenge: ageing populations.
7. The next two billion people will live in cities, so we need to plan now.



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MESSAGE

The Ministry of Women & Child Development has successfully concluded a two day conference on 'Issues and Challenges for Development of Scheduled Tribe Women and Children' on the 30th and 31st May, 2011 in New Delhi. We had also organized a similar conference for Scheduled Caste Women & Children in January, 2011. These conferences were convened with the specific purpose of focusing the attention of civil society, academia, Government agencies and stakeholders on the need to bring special groups on par with the national level of social development.

It is a fact that our tribal population has been left behind as demonstrated by indicators such as health, education, literacy and economic progress. Tribal communities are still uncovered with regard to provision of safe drinking water, electricity, local schools and primary health centres. We need to make strong efforts in order to provide an equitable environment for progress to our tribal population.

Keeping the unique culture and ethos of tribal communities in mind, we have to evolve systems of providing programme initiatives so that the process of development does not destroy the traditional structure and fabric of tribal society. The tribals have an inherent relationship with their land and forests. This relationship must be respected and strengthened by policy makers.

Tribal women and children need special coverage and in the past the Government had provided a Tribal Sub Plan in all departments for their coverage. There is a need to review this approach and to focus on the special needs of women and children under the national programmes that have been universalized such as ICDS, MNREGA, SSA and NRHM.

I am glad that this issue of 'Social Welfare' has taken up the theme of **tribal women**. This group faces many challenges such as insurgency and sectarian violence, alienation from traditional livelihoods, land and forests and forced migration for economic subsistence. We have some success stories from the tribal heartland that are worthy of dissemination.

Jai Hind.