

Bonda population on the decline

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The population of Bonda primitive tribal group (PTG) has declined despite steps taken by the State Government for their all round development.

According to official sources, a survey by the SCs and STs Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) made in 2010 had found the population of the Bonda tribes to be 6676. The number of families as per the survey was 1780. The population had come down from 9378 as per the 2001 census.

The Bondas numbered 2565 in 1941 census, 3641 in 1951, 4677 in 1961, 5338 in 1971, 5895 in 1981, 7315 in 1991 and 9378 in 2001. The growth rate which was 41.9 percent during 1941-51 came down to 14.3 percent as against 20.08 percent for the tribal population. Official sources said that their population had decreased as per the survey. The 2011 census details are yet to be available.

The State Government had constituted a micro project, Bonda Development Agency, in 1975 for 31 villages resided by the PGT within two gram panchayats on the Bonda hills in Malkangiri district. Funds are sanctioned by the State Government to the Bonda Development Agency for the social, educational and financial development of Bonda tribes.

Official sources said that the Government has opened four gyan mandirs, 14 primary schools, three upper primary schools, two high schools and education complex for the girls for the Bonda tribes. However, despite the initiatives taken by the State Government, literacy rate of the Bonda boys and girls remain one of the lowest. Their literacy rate remains as low as 14 percent.

As many as 1265 Bonda tribes have been distributed 3148 acres of land as per the forest rights act (FRA). Besides, official sources claimed that all the Bondas have been provided with job cards under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).