

Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA)



Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) is a comprehensive development initiative launched by the Government of India to accelerate the socio-economic progress of tribal communities living in remote and underdeveloped regions of the country. The programme seeks to transform tribal villages through integrated development by strengthening infrastructure, improving access to essential services, and promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities. The initiative reflects the Government's commitment to inclusive growth and aims to ensure that tribal populations are not left behind in the nation's development journey.

The campaign is implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and honors the legacy of the great tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda, who is widely revered as "Dharti Aaba" (Father of the Earth). His life and struggle symbolize the fight for tribal rights, dignity, and self-reliance. By naming the programme after him, the government intends to acknowledge the historical contribution of tribal leaders and inspire a new era of empowerment and development in tribal regions.

Historical Context and Inspiration

India is home to one of the largest tribal populations in the world. According to national census data, tribal communities constitute a significant portion of the population and are spread across several states, particularly in central, eastern, and northeastern India. Despite their rich cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and close relationship with nature, many tribal communities have historically faced economic marginalization, limited access to education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure.

Over the years, various government initiatives have been implemented to improve the conditions of tribal communities. However, the development gap between tribal and non-tribal regions has remained a challenge due to geographical isolation, limited connectivity, and lack of integrated planning. Recognizing these issues, the Government of India launched the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan as a large-scale mission to bring transformative change to tribal villages.

The programme was formally launched on 2 October 2024 by Narendra Modi. The launch coincided with the national emphasis on rural development and social inclusion, highlighting the government's intention to prioritize tribal welfare as a central component of national growth.

Vision and Mission

The central vision of DAJGUA is to ensure holistic and sustainable development of tribal villages. The mission focuses on improving the quality of life of tribal communities by providing better access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, digital connectivity, and livelihood opportunities.

The programme seeks to achieve the following goals:

- **Inclusive Development:** Ensure that tribal communities benefit from national development programs and policies.
- **Improved Living Standards:** Provide access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, electricity, roads, and sanitation.
- **Human Resource Development:** Strengthen educational and skill-development opportunities for tribal youth.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Promote sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship in tribal areas.
- **Social Security and Welfare:** Ensure effective delivery of welfare schemes to tribal populations.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Protect and promote the unique cultural traditions and heritage of tribal communities.

Coverage and Scale of the Programme

The Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan is one of the largest tribal development initiatives in India. It covers a wide geographical area and aims to benefit millions of tribal citizens across the country.

Key highlights of the programme include:

- Coverage of more than 63,000 tribal villages across India.
- Implementation across over 30 States and Union Territories.
- Inclusion of approximately 549 districts and nearly 3,000 administrative blocks.
- Expected benefits for over 5 crore tribal citizens.
- A financial allocation of approximately ₹79,000 crore for infrastructure development, social services, and livelihood programmes.

The large scale of the programme reflects the government's commitment to addressing long-standing challenges faced by tribal communities.

Integrated Development Approach

One of the most important features of DAJGUA is its **integrated and multi-sectoral approach**. The programme involves coordination among several ministries and departments to ensure that development initiatives are implemented effectively.

Approximately **17 central ministries** collaborate under this initiative to implement around **25 key development interventions**. These interventions cover a wide range of sectors including education, health, infrastructure, digital connectivity, and livelihood development.

By bringing multiple government departments together under a single mission framework, the programme aims to reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and ensure that tribal villages receive comprehensive development support.

Key Components of the Programme

1. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is one of the primary pillars of the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan. Many tribal villages are located in remote areas with limited connectivity.

The programme focuses on improving infrastructure through:

- Construction and improvement of rural roads.
- Expansion of electricity supply and renewable energy solutions.
- Development of drinking water facilities.
- Improved sanitation and waste management systems.
- Strengthening of digital connectivity and internet access.

These infrastructure improvements are expected to enhance mobility, economic opportunities, and access to government services in tribal regions.

2. Education and Skill Development

Education plays a crucial role in empowering tribal communities and enabling social mobility. DAJGUA aims to expand educational opportunities for tribal students through:

- Establishment of **tribal hostels and residential schools**.
- Strengthening of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)**.
- Scholarship programs and financial support for students.
- Digital education initiatives and smart classrooms.
- Skill development and vocational training programmes.

These initiatives aim to equip tribal youth with the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the modern economy while maintaining their cultural identity.

3. Healthcare and Nutrition

Healthcare access remains a significant challenge in many tribal regions due to geographical isolation and limited medical infrastructure.



The programme seeks to address these issues by:

- Deploying **mobile medical units** in remote villages.
- Strengthening primary healthcare centers.
- Expanding maternal and child health services.
- Improving nutrition programs through **Anganwadi centers**.
- Conducting health awareness campaigns.

By improving healthcare services, the programme aims to reduce disease burden and improve overall health outcomes in tribal communities.

4. Livelihood and Economic Development

Economic empowerment is a key focus of DAJGUA. The programme encourages tribal communities to engage in sustainable livelihood activities through:

- Skill training and entrepreneurship development.
- Promotion of traditional handicrafts and forest-based products.
- Establishment of **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** for value addition of forest produce.
- Support for self-help groups and micro-enterprises.
- Linkages with markets and digital platforms.

These initiatives help tribal communities increase their income while preserving their traditional knowledge and natural resources.

5. Digital and Financial Inclusion

In today's digital era, access to technology and financial services is essential for economic growth. The programme promotes digital inclusion by:

- Expanding internet connectivity in tribal villages.
- Promoting digital literacy programmes.
- Facilitating access to banking and financial services.
- Encouraging use of digital payment systems.

Role of Community Participation

A significant aspect of the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan is **community participation**. The programme encourages active involvement of tribal communities in planning and implementing development activities.

Local governance institutions such as **Gram Sabhas and Panchayats** play an important role in identifying community needs, monitoring project implementation, and ensuring transparency. This participatory approach ensures that development initiatives are aligned with the aspirations and priorities of tribal communities.



Environmental Sustainability

Tribal communities have traditionally lived in harmony with nature and possess deep ecological knowledge. DAJGUA emphasizes **sustainable development practices** that respect environmental balance.

The programme promotes:

- Sustainable forest management.
- Conservation of biodiversity.
- Promotion of eco-friendly livelihood activities.
- Responsible use of natural resources.

By integrating environmental sustainability with economic development, the programme seeks to create a balanced model of progress.

Significance for National Development

The Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan holds great significance for India's broader development goals. Tribal regions often contain valuable natural resources and cultural heritage, making them an important part of the country's social and economic fabric.

The programme contributes to:

- Reducing regional development disparities.
- Strengthening rural economies.
- Empowering marginalized communities.
- Promoting social justice and equality.
- Enhancing national unity and cultural diversity.

By improving living conditions in tribal areas, the initiative supports the broader vision of inclusive and sustainable development.

Challenges and Future Prospects

While the programme has immense potential, its success depends on effective implementation and coordination among various stakeholders. Some challenges that may arise include:

- Geographic isolation of tribal villages.
- Limited administrative capacity in remote areas.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Maintaining cultural sensitivity during development interventions.

Addressing these challenges will require continuous monitoring, community engagement, and policy innovation.

Looking ahead, the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan has the potential to become a transformative model for tribal development. By combining infrastructure development, social welfare, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability, the programme can significantly improve the lives of millions of tribal citizens.

Conclusion

The Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) represents a landmark initiative in India's efforts to promote inclusive growth and tribal empowerment. Inspired by the legacy of Birsas Munda and implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the programme seeks to bring comprehensive development to thousands of tribal villages across the country.

Through its integrated approach covering infrastructure, education, healthcare, livelihood development, and digital inclusion, the initiative aims to bridge the development gap between tribal and non-tribal regions. By empowering tribal communities and improving their quality of life, the programme contributes to the broader vision of a prosperous and equitable India.

In essence, the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan is not merely a development programme; it is a national commitment to ensuring that tribal communities become active partners in India's journey toward sustainable and inclusive progress.



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