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## Tribes and Indigeneity: Tribal Peoples Beyond a Merely Linguistic Distinction

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The concept of indigeneity frequently comes up in policy discussions on international legal standards, in the stated mission of international or regional conferences, by aid agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and in research projects engaging the issues of human rights, sustainable development, forest and biodiversity conservation, international trade, intellectual property rights and the environment. In all these topics, indigenous peoples' rights are given major attention and the terminology centers on "indigenous peoples" for identifying the rights holders. Notwithstanding, the policies of a number of national and international institutions view these rights holders under the term tribal. Why such a distinction? Since 2007, when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the most advanced rights' attributions in international law (although UNDRIP is not a binding convention but a declaration) has been intrinsically linked with the term "indigenous peoples." So, why we resort to this exploration of the concept of "indigeneity?" I explore why in this Special Issue we think it is valuable to explore ecological factors as a way of defining what we might call a "tribal" context. " The pairing of tribes and ecology smacks of an evolutionist approach, tied to colonial dominion, reliant on stereotypes of primitiveness and backward economies. Or at best a social order of rudimentary societal structures, geographic isolation, and endogamous exclusion. I argue, however, that this perspective collapses a great deal of heterogeneity within and across tribal societies. This is issue is not lost by invocations of indigeneity, but rather, the modern concept of indigeneity, and the attendant academic and policy discourses attached to it, is well suited for dealing with the complex histories and practices that comprise tribal societies in contemporary India.

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### Introduction

A closer look across Asian countries illustrates that the term "tribal" is still widely used, but that it also includes an emancipatory context and constitutional provisions favoring rights holders. These circumstances were, not the least, the reason for and the aim of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to review ILO Convention No. 107

(1957) by creating Convention No. 169 in 1989: “Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.”

Turning to the policy context in India: In addition to constitutional provisions, the category “tribe” still retains an important place within social and political discourse, both at levels of government discussion, and as a category used by tribal communities themselves. Nevertheless, a closer look at the matter indicates a need to determine what substance such a term may carry. It is worthwhile to clarify such discursive practices in order to understand what is rightly objectionable and what is juridically useful about making a distinction between tribal and indigenous peoples in contemporary India.

Beyond a mere linguistic approximation, this article explores both terms in a historic review followed by attention to each of its legal derivations and political implications by particularly comparing UNDRIP and the ILO Conventions. The subsequent sections will focus on their use in Asia and elaborate with a view to India in particular. In a last chapter, the article attempts to clarify the ambiguity surrounding these terms for a methodological perspective from a predominantly legal view – while other articles of this journal center these terms in the context of ecology and tribal studies. Thus, this text elaborates and explains the distinction between the categories “indigenous” and “tribal” peoples from a legal perspective, in particular based on international law.

### **Historical approximation**

From the outside, it is important to convey the scope of the groups under consideration. Altogether, indigenous and tribal peoples are comprising currently more than 476 million people, six percent of the global population, and are found in more than 90 countries worldwide.

The former UN Chairperson Rapporteur Erica-Irene Daes for the then Geneva-based Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights has outlined the concept of “indigenous” and “people(s)” during the drafting process on UNDRIP in the 1990s. Arguing that the term has functioned as a social construct mainly as the result of complex colonial and post-colonial history, the term “indigenous” has particularly evolved since it was first generally applied within European colonialism.

Later, the use of “indigenous” was given a complementary meaning within the American context. In 1938, the Pan-American Union, the predecessor of today’s Organization of American States, declared that indigenous populations are descendants

of the first inhabitants of the lands of today's Americas. They have a preferential right to protection by the public authorities with reference to their imbrication in and devastation by settler colonialism. Some decades later, indigenous peoples in Latin America were recognized as diverse nationalities, ethnicities and cultures victimized by hundreds of years of institutionalized and systematic discrimination, which rendered them marginal citizens within multi-ethnic, plural societies.

Linking the term "indigenous" with colonialism in order to identify their relationships with non-indigenous populations is arguably a more empirical claim of identity and belonging, than any of the essentialism ascribed by colonial and post-colonial cultures to indigenous "places of origin," or other essentializing tropes tying community to primordial connections to geographic place. Any classification by ancestral territory, while vital for some communities, retains pitfalls for others. For instance, there are local situations, in particular in Asia (or Africa), where both local minority and dominant neighboring communities claim indigeneity along incompatible historical grounds connected to exclusive territorializing claims.

Danilo Geiger proposed to refer to descendants of communities at the border of ethnic and cultural belonging with indigenous communities as "non-indigenous native communities." For his research on the relationship between indigenous peoples and settlers, Geiger utilized what he called a "practical diagnostic instrument" to distinguish indigenous groups from non-indigenous ones. Others, conversely, developed the term "prior" instead of "original" for those inhabiting colonizing lands. In some cases, such as the Gaddis of the Western Himalayas, the tribe is internally divided between those who claim to be autochthonous and those who claim later migrations (Christopher and Phillimore 2023). Thinking analytically about such concepts, the issue of self-identification needs to be complemented by the corresponding recognition through local and regional third-party or parties who are also non-hegemonic vis a vis settler colonial populations or caste groups.

At the United Nations, a standard-setting process was initiated in the late 1970s for codifying what were then called "indigenous populations" and "indigenous people." Studies to of this standard setting revealed further characteristics such as indigenous people(s) as sovereign subjects in international relations and treaties, particularly in the Americas, New Zealand and Australia. The term "First Nations", already used by indigenous peoples in North America before any UN process, indicated a long-standing insistence on their capacity as subjects of international relations and, on their

insistence of self-determination irrespective of any outcome in the development of territorial integrity for settler states.

While fears of territorial connotation and fear of secession has have made states reluctant to define indigenous communities as “peoples”, and such reluctance prevails till date, the drafting process on of UNDRIP on the issuance e of self-determination concentrated on internal aspects such as self-governance and autonomy. Nevertheless, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) intentionally avoided using the term “peoples” in its title and it was an arduous process to make “indigenous peoples” finally accepted in the UNDRIP. Therefore, Article 46 of UNDRIP guarantees as much as possible, to the greatest extent possible, the territorial integrity of concerned States. For indigenous peoples today, self-determination is the central tenet and main symbol of their articulation of, mostly, autonomy and a distinctive identity.

A parallel challenge emerged on the question of whether a generalizable global definition of “indigenous peoples” is necessary, and how far any definition is empirically possible. The arduous debates over establishing definitional standards have not been able to fully address the dilemma over the construction of indigenous identity; it ended in the concept of self-identification and its demand by UNDRIP Article 9, whereas Article 9 does not provide a universal definition either. Article 1 of ILO Convention No. 169 simply describes a general understanding of the concept of “indigenous and tribal peoples” for the purpose of the convention. The term “peoples” itself is not clearly defined in international law. In a last-minute effort before the 2007 adoption of UNDRIP was scheduled in 2007, states and indigenous representatives came to the agreement that the identification of indigenous peoples should better be accomplished at the country level in a dialogical and open process of consultation and discussion – in order to resolve the disputes about territorial integrity. In the end, there no general legal blueprint for identifying indigenous peoples.

Debates and challenges apply to the frequently reviled term “tribal” as well. There is a main common understanding that the term “tribal” essentially describes in its essence members of – sometimes extensive – kinship-based networks and small-scale communities or societies. Tribes are often thought to be caste homogenous and egalitarian, although this is not always the case; for example, the Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh that are caste-stratified and Scheduled Caste segments are petitioning the state for tribal inclusion (Christopher 2020). The minimal definition includes what has been

said that assumes essentializing features of the social organization or characteristics of life of indigenous peoples.

A last remark refers to the relationship with the term “minority”. Erica-Irene Daes has elaborated categories to distinguish between indigenous peoples and ethnic, religious or other minorities. Overlapping aspects include rights on non-discrimination and cultural integrity. Both categories are aspects of indigenous self-determination and the rights of minorities under international law. Indigenous peoples are considered to have more extensive rights than minorities in order to remedy counterbalance their history of an oppressive history of forced assimilation.

One of the crucial aspects in stressing a logical and conceptual difference between both minorities and indigenous peoples is the significance for the latter the attachment to territory complemented by the reference to a historical precedence in terms of “prior” claims to space and culture.

### **Legal aspects and implications – ILO and UNDRIP**

Around the world, people and individuals have struggled for centuries against colonization, forced assimilation, and systemic discrimination in order to be liberated from oppression and to have guaranteed basic rights. There are a number of terms which symbolize such struggles, like “liberation movements”. After long-standing protests, resistance, discussions and disputes, the term “indigenous peoples” has also become a symbol and conceptual framework for these aspirations. The process has resulted, among others, in the adoption of the UNDRIP which sets the minimum of international standards for the respect, recognition, and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples – while these rights continue to be violated in law and practice in many parts of the world.

### **International Labour Organization - ILO**

The first legally binding international instrument addressing the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples was ILO Convention No. 107 of 1957 (C107): “Convention concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries”. Article 1 of C107 defines the term “tribal”, among others, in relation to their social and economic conditions at a less advanced stage compared with their neighbors. Further, tribal peoples “are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest

or colonization”. Both “tribal” and “indigenous” people are mainly characterized by social, cultural, economic, legal and institutional distinctions. Sociopolitical oppression or discrimination is not a criterion with similar institutional weightiness.

A distinction is made by C107 referring to “indigenous” and “tribal” peoples which relates to conquest or colonization. It is not the aspect that of people being conquered or colonized but the subsequent result of being distinct as a society or nation enclosed by settler colonial societies. Here, C107 marshals the language of indigeneity, describing all “indigenous” people as “tribal”, but not all “tribal” people as “indigenous”. Since C107 guarantees both categories of people the same rights, there is no practical consequence. Noteworthy for the purpose of this article is the understanding that C107 handles tribal people as less advanced simply due to the contrast between colonizers and colonized. Thus, C107 has been closely linked with concepts of backwardness, assimilation and integration into the nation-state and the dominant society.

Since the decolonization process legitimated the issue of self-determination, and due to the harsh criticisms from indigenous peoples against the assimilationist approach in of C107, the ILO contemplated whether the scope of the right to self-determination could be made useful within the scope of ILO. In 1989, the ILO adopted then Convention No. 169 as successor to C107: “Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries” (C169). The assimilationist contents of C107 were removed.

C169 does not provide a universal definition of indigenous and tribal peoples but some criteria in Article 1 for identifying the peoples concerned. In particular, C169 identifies “tribal” peoples “whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations” (Article 1.a). C169 deletes any implication that tribal peoples might be inferior or backward. C169 attributes the same rights to “indigenous” and “tribal” peoples. C169 shifts the focus from assimilation and integration to rights and empowerment.

A kind of minimized difference between the concepts of “indigenous” and “tribal” relates to on distinctiveness. Both categories are defined by as constituting a distinct society. People are classified as “tribal” when the legal status is imposed by the State (Article 1.a) whereas being classified as “indigenous” if so regarded or having chosen to be indigenous can be a self-designation (Article 1.b and 1.2). State parties to C169 are obliged to establish for both pertinent projects tribal and indigenous peoples

specific social welfare and development projects which promote improvements in the living conditions of indigenous peoples.

There is no difference in the principle of self-determination between C107 und C169. C169 does not use the term while the provisions of C169 amount to the protection of self-determination, such as self-identification in Article 1.2. Other provisions relate to self-governance, spheres of autonomy, and participation of indigenous communities in decision making affecting them and in decisions on their own priorities of development.

## **UNDRIP**

Somewhat different is the terminology used by UNDRIP. There is no such term as “tribe” or “tribal” in the 46 articles. Compared to ILO Convention No. 107 and even Convention No. 169, UNDRIP formulates an explicit rights-based approach to vital aspects of the life of indigenous peoples such as ancestral territory and natural resources, specific land and forest rights, self-governance, self-ruling (i.e. by customary laws and customary stewardship) of administrative, cultural and religious structures, and explicitly including collective rights.

In fundamental difference to the legally binding instruments and to all previous documents at the United Nations dealing with indigenous and tribal peoples, UNDRIP claims the right to self-determination for the subjects and rights-holders of this Declaration: “indigenous peoples”. The right to self-determination is the centerpiece of UNDRIP and made explicit in Articles 3 and 4 UNDRIP.

Based on long-standing struggles, indigenous peoples have succeeded to make the principle of self-determination a rights-based approach at international as well as at regional and some national level – although UNDRIP itself is not a legally binding instrument. Initially it was difficult because official interpretations of the term and concept of self-determination applied to entire populations of States, whereas indigenous peoples generally form subpopulations. For many decades the right to self-determination was therefore inaccessible to indigenous peoples. As previously mentioned, meanwhile the right to self-determination also applies to peoples within nation States.

According to UNDRIP, self-determination means that indigenous peoples can decide their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. This includes the right to autonomy or self-government, the right to freely determine

the form of participation in the processes of power, and to choose and drive the own means of subsistence or livelihoods. Secession, then, is – if any – just one remedy of self-determination. Principally, Article 46 of UNDRIP leaves the door open for secession as a legitimate remedy if indigenous peoples are denied fundamental rights and access to political decision making processes, government and justice – but rather as a matter of principle.

James Anaya has differentiated the issue of self-determination of indigenous peoples within the State (internal self-determination) into five categories of rights: non-discrimination, cultural integrity, lands and resources, social welfare and development, and self-government. Each category imposes obligations on States to protect, to guarantee and to fulfill. The aspect of non-discrimination is considered a minimum and basic condition for the exercise of self-determination at all. Cultural integrity includes language, religion, or property rights. The State is further required to establish special projects to improve indigenous peoples' living conditions. Land rights of indigenous peoples are considered an integral part of their ability to achieve internal self-determination.

Today, the right to self-determination (Article 3 UNDRIP) serves as the basis for all other indigenous rights in international law and, accordingly, the right to self-determination has been progressively recognized there. For the purpose of this article it is sufficient to illustrate the scope of how much UNDRIP's rights-based approach has expanded to the institutions of international and regional law and, thus, how far the term "indigenous peoples" has turned into a standard and symbol for the self-determination of indigenous subjects, their interests and perspectives.

The UN Human Rights Committee has, even before UNDRIP was established, examined indigenous situations in light of the ICCPR's affirmation of self-determination in ICCPR Article 1. Vice versa, governments themselves have used Article 1 ICCPR in their reports to the Committee in order to highlight their policies towards indigenous peoples. The Committee has further started to examine the situations of indigenous communities with respect to infringements of the issue of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The UN Committee on Women's Rights (CEDAW) states in its General Recommendation No. 39 that the Committee considers UNDRIP an authoritative framework to interpret the State Parties' core obligations under CEDAW.



Also, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) consistently surveys the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the provisions of the UNDRIP in its observations and recommendations to governments or when CERD acts under its early warning and urgent action procedure. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) repeatedly referred to Article 1 of the corresponding International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in relation to indigenous land and resource rights. In addition, the Committee highlighted FPIC in its General Comment No. 21 as a fundamental guarantee derived from the right to self-determination. At the level of regional jurisdiction, to date mostly the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights deals with the right to self-determination or FPIC in accordance with UNDRIP and the attribution “indigenous”.

The provisions by UNDRIP have further become normative standards for UN human rights guidelines and instruments such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), UN-REDD Program Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (2013), the UN Working Group on the issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises (2013) or for UN organizations and agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF or the UN Development Program.

### **Indigenous and tribal peoples in Asia**

As said, most of the governments in Asia – with certain exceptions such as Japan, the Philippines, Nepal and Taiwan – do not generally recognize any concept of “indigenous”. The governments are in particular afraid that under international law, the identification of indigenous peoples may imply binding rights which can be enforced against the States concerned. Vice versa, Asian governments, have constantly raised the need for the Declaration to explicitly and globally define indigenous peoples. Indigenous representatives from Asia succeeded to convince the governments that it is more feasible to make such a definition at the national level and to finally vote for the adoption of UNDRIP. However, some of them still insist that in their countries there are no indigenous peoples at all.

This contrasts with the emergence of indigenous movements worldwide including nearly all Asian countries. In Asia, a starting point was in the 1990s when, first, the UN International Year of the World’s Indigenous People was proclaimed in 1992, and followed, second, by two International Decades of the World’s Indigenous People (1995-2004, 2005-2014). One of the main goals of the decades was to foster international cooperation in order to better address problems faced by indigenous

peoples in areas such as human rights, culture, environment, development, education and health.

Inspired by the aims and aspirations of these proclamations, it was particularly in Asia that a massive self-organizational process took place. Indigenous and tribal peoples, communities and representatives in Asia (as well as in Africa) felt for the first time officially perceived. Furthermore, the denial of their rights to control their own development based on own values, needs and priorities has been recognized. Their aspirations had now been reflected and identified in documents set and adopted by the highest authoritative body of the United Nations, the General Assembly. The term “indigenous” started to be linked to the claim of wanting to make history by their own means. Their struggles to have rights over their cultures, lands, territories and resources, their customary governance systems and laws had never ceased and had now succeeded, at least, at the international level to garner global attention. The term “indigenous” opened the public and social space in Asia for making the substance acknowledged, legally visible and socially dynamic.

### **Indigenous and tribal peoples in India**

Indigenous and tribal peoples in India represent an enormous diversity in terms of ecological conditions, physical features, language, social organization, governance structures, culture and religion. Although the appropriate identification is complex, people define themselves in relation to their history, social, cultural, linguistic or economic embedding vis-a-vis the larger Indian society and dominant population.

In India, there are 705 ethnically defined groups officially registered and recognized as “Scheduled Tribes” – although there are many more ethnic groups that would qualify for the status of Scheduled Tribes. The total of indigenous and tribal people amounts to approx. 104 million or some 8.6 percent of the national population. The largest concentrations of tribal peoples are found in the northeastern States of India followed by the so-called “central tribal belt” that comprises the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

India provides a number of constitutional guarantees, such as the Fifth Schedule for central India and the Sixth Schedule for areas of northeastern India. The status of Scheduled Tribe qualifies its subjects for protective arrangements (i.e. genuine ruling on ancestral land and self-governance) and affirmative actions (i.e. preferential treatment in the allotment of jobs and access to higher education), previously in order

to accelerate the assimilation. Thus, the term “tribe” in this legal context is associated more with a political-administrative than a historical category. In central India, the term Scheduled Tribes includes also Adivasi (first settlers), which literally means indigenous peoples and has a different background compared to “tribe”.

Since independence, the Indian governments have argued that the Indian nation has no indigenous people or peoples respectively, or that all Indians are equally indigenous. Nevertheless, India voted in favor of UNDRIP on the condition that at national level India does not consider the concept of indigenous peoples. Therefore, any Indian government (at Union level) has ever considered UNDRIP as being applicable to India – and C169 neither. Only the State government of Jharkhand has declared the “International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples” as a State holiday being celebrated on August 9 every year worldwide.

The term Adivasi literally means “first settlers” and emerged, according to Claudia Dessanti, in India’s public domain in 1938. The term Adivasi was revived in particular in the late 1980s when self-organized movements of tribal people started to claim their collective identity as people with a long history of displacement, discrimination and oppression. Inspired by the international discussion on indigenous peoples, the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal People (ICITP) emerged with the aspiration to be an all India umbrella organization, and with Ram Dayal Munda (1939-2011) as one of its leading political and intellectual figures.

The term Adivasi and the self-organized movement was understood to have freely chosen its identification, self-defined its identity as well as reconstructed its histories by its own view and perspective. The Adivasi movement insisted, among others, on tracing its histories back to the pre-Aryan period of Indian history. The coming of the Aryans has been considered a decisive historical factor to determining indigeneity in India, even if the actual historical outlines of such a definition remain continually debated. Adivasi people referred to the pre-Aryan time to underline that they are indigenous in essence, although due to displacement this has been no longer true for every geographical space where they live today. The Adivasi community of the Ho is, in fact, not in the strict sense “indigenous” to the district of Singhbhum (State of Jharkhand) but has migrated from northern Chota Nagpur between the eighth and twelfth centuries.

The category “tribe” still retains and enjoys acceptability in India including among those who qualify for the term Adivasi. Some people are hesitant to use the term Adivasi as considered too politically connoted. The notion of tribe, on the other hand, was introduced by the British colonial rulers, which, along with enabling forms of dispossession and violence, created an ethnically-defined framework for the constitutional provisions that would come to dominate in post-Independence India. To date, the Indian State follows the idea that people and communities with ancestral ties should be subject to state intervention.

India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, laid emphasis on the integration of tribal people considering them, above all, as Indians who should make their progress in their own way, with no imposition or compulsions from the outside. While Nehru recognized the autonomous identity of “tribes”, he simultaneously attempted to make tribal identity a part of Indian identity. In principal, this might have had emancipatory aspects while there was a strong hierarchical understanding whose values would prevail and whose adaptation – or assimilation respectively – should be accelerated.

In northeastern India, it is even more important to distinguish the terminologies. In British colonial times, the tea plantations in Lower Assam recruited tribal people (Adivasi) such as Oraon, Munda, or Santhal as laborers. After their contracts expired, a number of them settled in the vicinity of the plantations, some in vicinity of the Bodo, the prior inhabitants to that area. In recent decades the Adivasi were increasingly perceived and attacked as illegitimate intruders. Such constellation is repeated in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian government offered in the mid-1960s home to estimated 15,000 members of Chakma whose ancestral territories had been flooded by the Kaptai Dam, then East Pakistan, today Bangladesh. Initial local opposition against the refugees turned meanwhile into open hostility and partially violent anti-settler campaigns.

The identification of indigenous and tribal people in India is complex. The term and concept of Adivasi relates to the understanding of indigenous peoples and has expanded. Since the early 1990s, Adivasi activists understand the term and concept in terms of a rights-based approach. In addition, the term goes beyond groups and communities that are listed as Scheduled Tribes and detaches the identification from the state assignment. Although the terms “Adivasi” and “tribe” are used and understood by tribal people themselves not necessarily as being congruent, the self-identification as Adivasi has increased. Whereas the understanding by administrators, lawyers and academics is based predominantly on the term Scheduled Tribes and tribal

people correspondingly. Again, the term “indigenous peoples” stemming from the United Nations’ context planned the public space for the better understanding of the complex legal and societal scope of communities who are still identified as “tribals”.

## Conclusion

The status of indigenous peoples in the Indian presents empirical and conceptual challenges for community activists, tribal movements, development experts, and government officials alike. Among the tribal people of central India the identity as Adivasi is crystallizing. The use of “indigenous” identification instruments has now expanded from activism and human rights defenders to areas such as public discourse, scientific disciplines, and everyday situations in communities. Until very recent times, the use of the term “indigenous” in India was thought of hardly any merit for discussion. This is no longer true.

While the position of the state appears to remain unchanged regarding the acknowledgement of indigenous populations, Adivasi committed to empowerment have simply and informally supplemented the historical terminology with the term and concept conducive to an indigenous perspective. The prevailing view today on “indigenous” matters in India is that this term is key for the self-organization process of Adivasi. The open informal scope for interpretation and attribution has rather contributed to the emergence of a public discourse of deliberation at all. In addition to historically based characteristics, such as ancestral territories, the debates around Adivasi features and rights meanwhile widely support that Adivasi are embedded into an international context. Adivasi are subject to participate in the decision making relative to indigenous issues. The Adivasi commitment with empowerment will demand responses to new situations in the dynamic process of recognizing indigenous peoples’ rights in India.

What does that mean for the practical work at scientific level? Research in all relevant disciplines and consultation with local people would be useful to illuminate the understanding of the concept of "indigenous". Based on those findings, the research could be instrumental to reflect on the dimensions of working under indigenous features as well as to consider practical tools for the ongoing research. In parallel, a dialogue between scientific experts and representatives of indigenous peoples would exchange key findings of each of the participants. In principle, such exchanges would also involve governments, while the effort required to do so may not be well invested at present, if one thinks of India and other Asian countries. The dialogues would finally seeking to develop best practice for the research with indigenous (Adivasi) people(s) in

terms of both concept and methodology. Somewhat in the future, such dialogues may emerge with standards consistent with indigenous peoples' rights in international law.

Making indigenous peoples' rights recognized requires a certain commitment by the research community as well. In order to promote the rights-based characteristics and articulation of interests of indigenous peoples, scholars and scientists are encouraged to make the constituent aspects for indigenous peoples prominent through their own research practices.

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