

# Tribal Leadership Programme 2026

Embark on a journey  
with ignited minds

## CHANGE WHOSE TIME HAS COME

While we get captivated over sunsets along the horizon edging over the skyscrapers and modern architecture, there are communities living on the farther limits of that horizon, engulfed in deep forests and landscapes. These are our tribal communities who thrive on the strong bond with nature and could be our probable saving grace when the wrath of climate change unleashes upon us. Their understanding of natural systems may lie beyond the conventional means, but they will need to be understood by everyone. This will also need a certain empathetic, rooted, intelligent and peaceable leadership to emerge from within the tribal communities and engage with the world. To foster the symbiotic association, certain value systems are required, most of which comes from mutual respect and adoration for each other's journey, traditions, and transitions.

## RECOGNISING THE LEADER WITHIN

Tribal Leadership Programme (TLP) is on the look-out for individuals who will drive that necessary change and be a role model for their next generations.

It is a residential workshop for individuals from tribal communities who feel strongly about the challenges facing their peoples, believe in the power of the tribal discourse and have the will to make a difference. TLP, a part of the Samvaad ecosystem enabled by Tata Steel Foundation, aims to bring together young individuals from tribal communities, by creating a one-of-its-kind platform, to learn, co-learn and share stories of their successes, failures, inspirations while forming impactful connections. The goal is to contribute to building a nation that has a leadership based on ground-up experience.

*If you relate to this thought, you belong to TLP.*

## WHAT TLP OFFERS?

TLP is a year-long engagement which is initiated through a week-long module each year. It provides continued access to experts and peer perspectives to leverage Tata Steel Foundation's Samvaad ecosystem (A confluence of tribal communities and their value systems).

### In particular, the key takeaways are:

- A space to connect with one's deeper self to take on the external challenges and develop perseverance.
- A platform to understand and deconstruct relevant socio-political issues.
- An interface with experts and potential mentors to enable a learning on leadership for social impact.
- A perspective on tribal development and identity firmly rooted in grassroots experience and reality.

## WHO ARE WE?

Tata Steel Foundation has over hundred years of shared context with tribal communities. Samvaad – Tata Steel Foundation's ecosystem on tribal identity – emerged in 2014 and since then, has been shaping its contours to represent and lend platform to culture, heritage, and development perspective of tribal communities from across the country. In a span of over a decade, it has emerged as the single-largest ecosystem that encourages dialogue, discussion, and dissent, and celebrates the very essence of being a tribal person.



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# ALUMNI SPEAK

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**Gracy Lamkholing**  
Kuki Tribe, Manipur, TLP 2024

"The Tribal Leadership Programme (TLP) 2024 is a place where my journey as a leader truly started. It gave me the chance to learn more about tribal governance and policy while building my confidence to stand strong. I sat with peers who shared the same fire, exchanged stories of struggles and successes, and we grew together. Its focus on reflection and handling conflicts spoke deeply to my own path—from healing to leading with purpose. TLP helped me turn my personal experiences into powerful lessons that can bring real change. For me, it is not just a programme, but a movement that believes in leadership rising from the ground, from lived realities. It is both a mirror of my dreams and a spark that pushes me to build inclusive platforms where communities, especially women and youth, can rise with pride and strength."



**Garima Sidar**  
Gond Tribe, Chhattisgarh, TLP 2023

"I think Tribal Leadership Programme has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life. At that point of time, I was learning and getting to know about the ground level deep reality and also just finished working on a project that mapped disproportionate target of indigenous communities at the hand of wildlife offences. It was very devastating to see how certain laws put marginalised communities into further margins. I was so excited to meet people, listen to their stories and get to know more about the layered problems that we face across the country. And when I met everyone and listened to their stories, I felt like when I can move forward working on other humanitarian projects. My learnings from TLP will always be like guiding principle. Thereafter, I got to serve Centre for Research and Planning, Supreme Court of India as a Law Researcher where learning from TLP helped me to shape solutions and recommendations on the project that is inclusive of tribal viewpoint. I have been blessed with few very precious friendships through TLP who continue bestow their support on me through personal and profession challenges."



**Ankish Chaudhari**  
Chaudhari Tribe, Gujarat, TLP 2024

"I served as Sarpanch for two years before joining the Tribal Leadership Programme. But TLP helped me understand the difference between mere leadership and true statesmanship. I used to be afraid of making decisions, but after TLP, I learned to lead fearlessly. I learnt from TLP that leadership means creating 100 more leaders like yourself. Today, many of the youth want to enter politics and, like me, wish to lead with understanding. Many young people see me as an idol. There was very little awareness about reading in our area. Today, students from 20 to 25 villages come to my library, and I have ignited a hunger for reading in our region. Our students have started dreaming of becoming officers. Inspired by our library, 50 to 60 more libraries have started at the village level. The name of our mission is 'Mission Education', and my TLP experience has been very useful in fulfilling this mission."



**Kusum Meena**  
Bhil Tribe, Rajasthan, TLP 2024

"As the name suggests, the Tribal Leadership Programme taught us what true leadership should be like. We also learned how to awaken empathy and how to live life with the nine emotional rasas. In the Tribal Leadership Programme, tribal leaders and youth from all communities across the country were brought together, which helped us build connections nationwide. Even years after the programme, these connections remain strong. We also got the opportunity to experience the traditions, languages, and cultures of tribal communities from all over India. The Tribal Leadership Programme gave me a new family—an emotionally connected group that will stay together for life."



**Anand Vanthala**  
Kotia Tribe, Andhra Pradesh, TLP 2023

"In a world of rapidly changing civilization where we have slowly lost our own identity, the Tribal Leadership Programme helped me rediscover pride in who I am as an indigenous individual deeply rooted in my culture and tradition."



**Jagdev Munda**  
Munda Tribe, Jharkhand, TLP 2024

"After attending the Tribal Leadership Programme and the Samvaad conclave, I felt as if I have acquired half the knowledge of life. I got to know about the culture, lifestyle, food habits and customs of people from different states and different tribal communities and being an artist, I got to see and learn many forms of art and visual arts."



**Saroj Tamang**  
Tamang Tribe, West Bengal, TLP 2024

"The nature we live with, let us protect it today. This Earth will survive, only then will our existence remain. Our NGO is continuously working to protect nature. Come, let's join hands and strengthen this campaign. The Earth needs all of us together. That is what TLP taught me."

## Eligibility

Applicant should belong to a Scheduled Tribe, between 20-35 years of age.

For further details, do connect with

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You may register online at:

<https://forms.office.com/r/fMdc1uMHEh>

or

Send scanned copy of your application to:  
**tlp@tatasteelfoundation.org** by March 15, 2026

You can also **scan the QR code**  
to access the application form



**Date – June 2026**

**Venue - Will be shared with shortlisted candidates**

