

# SOLINGA TRIBE: ENVIRONMENT

**NEWS:** *Modi praises role of Soligas in tiger conservation*

## WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Soliga Tribe of Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve in Karnataka, recognized for their deep connection with nature, became the first tribal community in India to secure forest rights within a tiger reserve. Their traditional conservation practices contribute to biodiversity protection, while concerns over balancing tribal rights and wildlife conservation remain a key issue.

## Soliga Tribe

- **Location:** Indigenous forest-dwelling tribe found in the Cauvery Basin and surrounding hills of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- **Habitat:** Reside near Biligiri Rangana Hills and Male Mahadeshwara Hills in Chamarajanagar district.

## Name & Cultural Significance:

- “Soliga” means “**children of bamboo**”, reflecting their deep bond with nature.
- They believe they emerged from nature, maintaining a harmonious relationship with forests.

## Recognition of Forest Rights:

- First tribal community in India to have their forest rights recognized within a tiger reserve.
- 2011 court ruling secured their rights to habitat and collection of non-timber forest produce in BRT Tiger Reserve.
- **Language:** Speak **Sholaga** (Dravidian language), also fluent in **Kannada and Tamil**.
- **Religion & Beliefs:** Follow **Hindu customs** while practicing **naturism and animism**, reflecting their **spiritual bond with nature**.
- **Traditional Economy & Livelihood:**
  - Depend on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce collection.
  - Honey is an essential part of their diet, and they extensively forage in the Western Ghats.

## Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve

### Location:

- Situated in **Chamarajanagar district, Karnataka**.
- **Confluence of the Western and Eastern Ghats**, forming a critical **wildlife corridor**.

### Nomenclature:

- Named after ‘**BILIGIRI**’ (**white rocky cliff**), housing the temple of **Lord Vishnu (Rangaswamy)**.

- Hills are covered in **white mist and silvery clouds**.

## Flora and Fauna of BRT Tiger Reserve

### Forest Types:

- Southern Tropical Evergreen
- Southern Tropical Semi-evergreen
- Southern Tropical Moist Deciduous

### Key Tree Species:

- **Upper Canopy:** Axlewood (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Rosewood (*Dalbergia paniculata*), Terminalia spp.
- **Middle Layer:** Chironji (*Buchanania lanzan*), Wild Guava (*Careya arborea*), Ceylon Oak (*Schleichera oleosa*).
- **Lower Strata:** Golden Shower Tree (*Cassia fistula*), Indian Gooseberry (*Phyllanthus emblica*), Indian Frankincense (*Boswellia serrata*).

### Fauna:

- **Mammals:** Wild Dog, Bison, Sloth Bear, Sambar.
- **Birds:** Yellow-throated Bulbul, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Rufous-bellied Hawk Eagle.
- **Amphibians:** Endangered *Ichthyophis ghytinus* (Caecilian).



Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/pm-modi-praises-soliga-tribes-for-their-role-in-tiger-conservation-in-mann-ki-baat/article69254558.ece>