

How to Cite:

Mishra, G., Meena, A. K., & Rohit, V. (2022). Where to claim caste: The problem of contested identities among de-notified communities. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S5), 11261–11273. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS5.10997>

Where to claim caste: The problem of contested identities among de-notified communities

Dr. Gaurav Mishra

Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. 15- Janpath, New Delhi, India 110001
Corresponding author Email: gaurav.anthro@gmail.com

Dr. Anil Kumar Meena

Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. 15- Janpath, New Delhi, India 110001

Dr. Vikas Rohit

Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. 15- Janpath, New Delhi, India 110001

Abstract---Thinking about the most disadvantaged, deprived, and vulnerable groups while living in a country with one of the fastest-growing economies in the world is no great surprise. In this independent country, there are those who are experiencing an identity crisis in everyday life. They are stigmatized as "Born Criminals" by society, and their numerous silent sacrifices are never documented in the pages of history. These so-called De-notified in government records have the most dreadful living conditions. The Indian government, as well as various state governments, have taken numerous steps to help them return to the mainstream, but these efforts have yet to bear fruit. The current paper is an attempt to carry the torch for these de-notified but respectable members of society who, even after seventy years of Indian independence, find themselves at a crossroads or just a mere identity.

Keywords---Born Criminals, De-notified Tribes, Societal Stigma, Criminal Tribes Act, Habitual Offender Act, Government Policies, Uttar Pradesh.

Introduction

During the British rule some tribes were classified as Criminals. These tribes were noted under the Criminal tribe Act or CTA, 1871. The main reason behind the notification or categorization of some tribes is that the Colonial British

Government wanted to have a complete ownership a number of resources like forests because forests are the big tangible resources. These are the big resources in bounty as a capital of number of food products and non food products like wood, minerals etc, acting as a raw input for various industrial materials which were needed at that point of time. So, forest resource means a lot during the british rule. But something was impeding them to have free access to those precious assets. These are the people living in the forests, the tribes those are not ready to give their rights away to the forests. Those tribes who believe that forests belong to them, forests are the mode of their livelihood. The Jal, Jangal and Jamin are their main fundamentals of livelihood. The people of these communities were not allowed to leave there native place and restricted their movement. So they fight against the British officials and because of these fights British administration wanted to have a upper hand on the tribes, and they identified, categorised and notified such communities into Criminal tribes. Study been conducted and it is concluded that the prevalence of caste system is based upon the nature of profession and hence these are the castes which are professionally criminal.

The British Government in 1830 appointed William Henry Sleeman to prepare a list of instances of assaults on wayfarers in Central part of India (Devy, 2012). This list of assaults was laid the foundation of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 (fig no1). This act notified several tribes as criminal communities. This step also was taken by them to maintain law and order after India's first war of independence or mutiny of 1857.

CRIMINAL TRIBES ACT, 1871	
CONTENTS	
Preamble.	
SECTION	
1. Short title.	
Commencement.	
Local extent.	
PART I	
CRIMINAL TRIBES	
2. Local Government to report what tribes should be declared criminal.	
3. Report to contain certain particulars.	
4. Occupation of wandering tribe to be stated; also proposed residence and means of livelihood.	
5. Notification declaring tribe to be criminal.	
6. Bar of jurisdiction of Courts in questions relating to notification.	
7. Register of members of such tribes.	
8. Procedure in making register.	
9. Penalties for failing to appear, refusing or giving false information.	
10. Charge of register.	
Reporting desirable alterations.	
11. By whom alterations to be made.	
Notice to persons affected.	

Fig 1: Criminal Tribe Act (National Archives, New Delhi)

The result of this CTA is any person belonging to those particular tribes that has been categorised as criminal tribe can be considered as a criminal. And if in case any crime happens in the vicinity of a particular tribe or community residing the person belonging to the particular tribe can be picked up by the local police and a number of atrocities were posed to these so called criminals. So it is a totally an

act of brutality and viciousness over the certain communities by the British Officials. It was an act of punishment to these tribes without any remorse.

After Independence

After Indian independence, the then government realizes the grievances of the criminal tribes. They consider that how much tyranny has been unleashed over these notified tribes, communities and the people. So government set up a committee (A. Ayyangar committee) to give a status of those notified tribes. And on the recommendation of the committee in 1952, this Criminal tribe Act has been repealed and has no longer has a statutory basis to be act over these people (Ayyangar, M. A., 1951). This abolishment provides a freedom to them from brutality coming from years. But the government in order to tame or to make a grip on few communities which are committing crime against the people of society in 1959 presented another act known as Habitual Offender Act. This act was less draconian than CTA, 1871, which states that the people taken birth in these communities are born criminals whether they are committing or not committing any crime. So after 1952 the process begins for de-notification of the tribes.

This act was further modified in the year 1911 but no major change took place. In 1924, the act was modified to facilitate the process of integration of the criminal tribes with mainstream, but the basis ideology of legislative purpose remains the same. In 1937, the Governor of Bombay province appointed a committee under the headship of K.M. Munshi, to review the act. The committee in its report, for the first time defined various terms like tribe, gang, lass, habitual offender, criminal, etc. The act was repealed by the Government of Bombay in 1949, while the Madras government has repealed it in 1948.

In year 1953, the first Backward Class Commission known as Kalelkar commission was appointed who suggested that the tag of ex-criminal tribes must be discarded and they must be called as de-notified communities. They recommend a division of ex-criminal tribes into two sections as Nomadic and settled. In 1965, Lokur committee was constituted to further review the status of the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes which suggested that all members of the Denotified tribes usually given the schemes of SC's and ST's which are not benefitting them hence their inclusion in a distinct group was suggested with development schemes specially designed for them (Lokur, 1965).

In 2002 the National Commission to review the working of constitution was headed by Justice Venkatachaliah submits his report recommending the programmes to strengthen the economic and educational development of de-notified which paved a way for the constitution of a separate commission to look into the needs and grievances of them. A National Commission was constituted and it came into existence in the year 2005 with headship of Balkrishna Reneke. National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes in 2005 also describes the account of further developments with respect to these tribes. In addition a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), in 2006 constituted a working group on de-notified, nomadic and semi nomadic tribes. In 2008 Reneke Commission reported that their criminal label is still persistent and giving society and police a stigma of criminal and recommends the preparation of state wise list of these

communities. A special awareness drive and skill development programme is highly needed (Reneke, 2008).

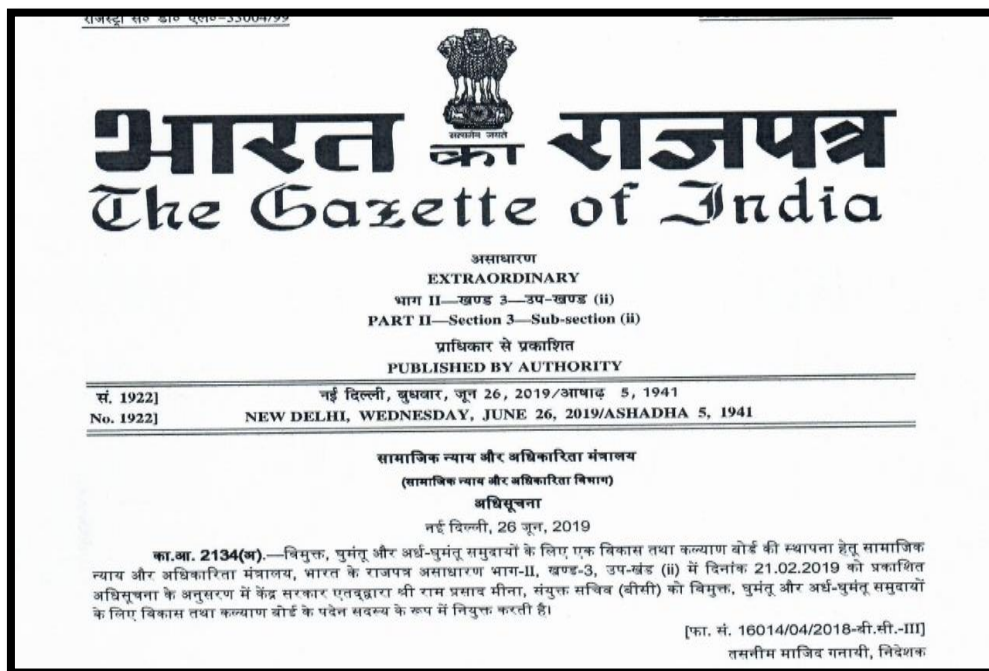


Fig 2: Gazette of India, 2019 (National Archives, New Delhi)

The National Commission of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes under headship of BhikuRamjildate in 2017, submitted a report to the Government of India which pointed out the need to provide them with access to education, housing, infrastructure, health facilities, microfinance, and opportunities for skill development. The report also recommends the need of a permanent commission, a separate directorate, detailed survey in Census for NT and DNT's and an urging need of awareness drive among the society and in the DNT's. They have recommended 20 points of rehabilitation which can take them into the mainstream of the society (Idate, 2017). After which another notification came into front to establish a board for DNTs, NT and SNTs (fig no:2).

Present Situation

However a number of steps have been taken from 1959 to present but the situation is not much changed. From pre independence to post independence it seems that lots of praiseworthy things were happen to them but actually the situation is graving.

The fact is that however the CTA hasonly repealed from the statutory books still it holds lots of enertia. The police, the society the neighbourhood how they treat the people belong to that tribe are noxious. There still a stigma is attached to these now called De-notified tribes. These de-notified tribes still feels lots of disempowerment. Still whenever a crime has been committed the people

belonging to these de-notified communities were the first accused interrogated by the local police. They are still not able to become a part of the main stream of society. The main stream society is quite repulsive to these people. Rehabilitation has not been done properly.

Problems Faced by Denotified Tribes

The imperial rulers did not understand the meaning of nomadism. It is also a way of life with a large number of communities living in India and abroad. It is not only a mere life style but also a philosophy of life (Singh, 2008). The classes of people and communities who lived with and in nature, and practiced nomadism were misunderstood by the imperial rulers and administrators and were branded in a negative manner, which gave rise to continuing **Human rights violation**.

They were facing difficulties as a result of their purported criminal history. They emphasised the injustices they face today at the hands of the police, such as arresting and detaining people without cause at night and failing to file FIRs. They've also asked for voter ID cards and ration cards, which they can't get right now because they can't offer a permanent address. They also called attention to the inconsistencies in classifying some tribes as STs in one state while not having access to the same facility in another. They urged that the Habitual Offenders Act be repealed.

Shri Y. Bhaskar Rao, a member of the Commission, emphasised the importance of giving their problems top priority and stated that a research should be conducted to identify Denotified tribes/groups in each state to aid in their socioeconomic growth. Shri Bhaskar Rao further stated that it is necessary to determine whether or not members in these communities have a source of income, and if not, to supply alternative skills (NHRC, 2004).

The Denotified communities are facing innumerable problems in their day-to-day life. As discussed earlier about the **social stigma** of theirs in the minds of nearby residing populations, which is the root cause of many a problems like these people were not only wrongly treated by the society but also **harassed** in a big deal. These people were mostly **illiterate**, so being uneducated make them **unaware** of any assistance given to them and other schemes and policy running by the state and union government. They are mostly settled in outskirts of urban areas and surrounded by heap of garbage and solid waste thrown by the municipalities of the concerned areas in the landfills, which make their life a naked hell. Their living conditions are so **underprivileged** that they lack the very **basic amenities and infrastructure** to sustain a healthy life.

The **hygiene conditions** are not in their list to consider which in turn gives a number of diseases to them including **jaundice and cholera** as very common members in every household (Mishra & Singh, 2017). One of the major issues they are facing is the **identity crisis** as most of the time they are living in temporary settlements having their traditional set up occupations moving from one area to another without any special assistance from reservation and jobs.

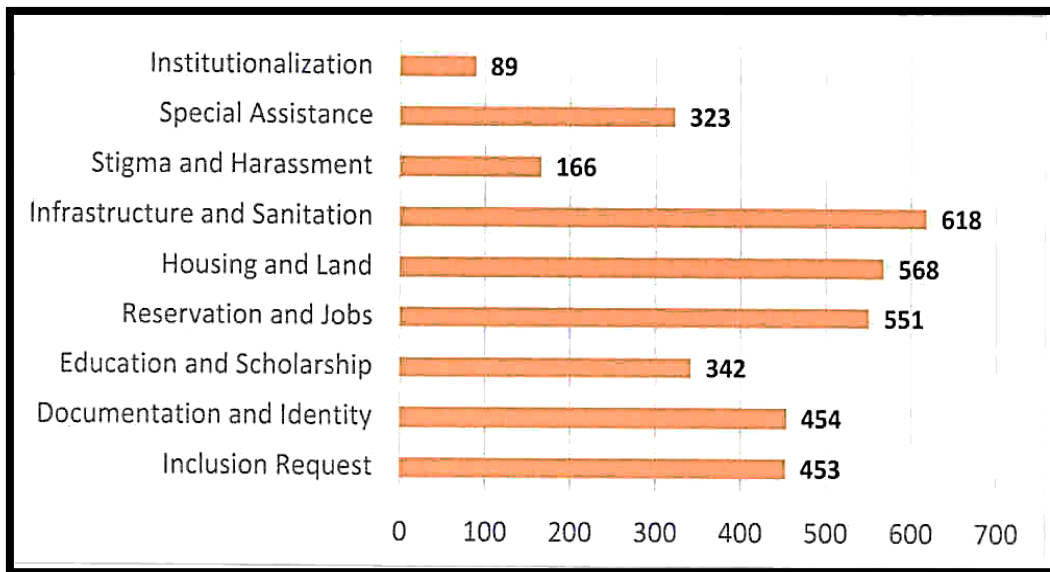


Fig3: Analysis of grievance petitions by Idate commission (Source: Idate, 2017)

Looking at the grievance petitions reported by the National Commission for De-notified Nomadic And Semi- Nomadic Tribes, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New Delhi in front of Shri Bhiku Ram Idate (Idate, 2017), one can have a clear glimpse as shown in fig no 3, over various serious issues by way of 618 petitions are over the matters of infrastructure and sanitation, 568 on housing and land related issues, 551 on reservation and jobs, 454 on documentation and identity, 453 on inclusion request send by the community people, 342 related to education and scholarships, 323 on special assistance while 166 petitions are filed on cases related to stigma and harassment.

As per the inclusion request by the communities to the commission it can be concluded that their members wanted to be included with Scheduled Caste status (63), Scheduled Tribe (266), OBC (14). But few groups (110 in number) which have a vision to be included in a new constitutional group the DNT or NT group.

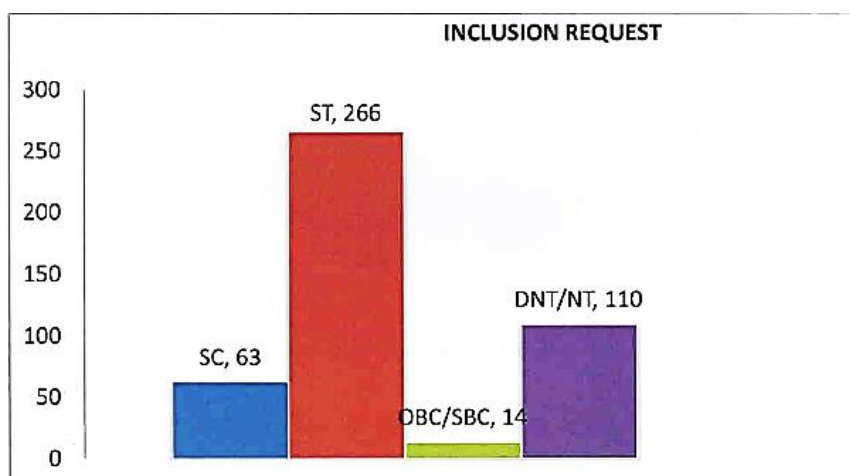


Fig 4: Analysis of inclusion request by Idate commission (Source: Idate, 2017)

Centrally Sponsored Schemes

The union government of India have running a number of schemes under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The schemes are widely spread under the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward class of notified community. But there are few other umbrella schemes given by the government as discussed over here. The Centrally sponsored schemes being implemented for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes are given (MSJE, 2021) as:

- Dr. Ambedkar Pre-matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNT Boys and Girls.
- Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls.
- Assistance for Skill Development of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) / De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)/ Economically Backward Classes (EBCs).
- Constitution of Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities.

Budgetary Allocation (Central Govt)

A more specific analysis of the budget for the schemes for the development of the DNTs across six years shows a slow growth. While the budget slightly increased in 2018-19 to 10 crore from Rs 6 crore, it has been stagnant since then as shown in table 1.

It was significant to note that, the actual expenditure for each year has been below the budgetary allocation, showing the inability of DNTs to avail of funds and resources meant for them. Allocation for the Welfare Board created in 2019 was slightly increased to Rs 1.24 crore in 2020-21 from Rs 0.40 crore in 2019-20.

Table 1: Budgetary Allocation of the Central Schemes for DNT and NTs

Year	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	2020-21
(in Rs crore)	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	B
National Commission for Denotified Tribes	*	0.91	1.76	2.09	2.50	1.92	-	-	-	-
Schemes for the Development of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes	*	4.50	5.00	4.50	6.00	5.40	10.00	9.00	10.00	10.00
Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.40 [#]	1.24

Sources: [https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2019-20\(I\)/ub2019-20/eb/stat3a.pdf](https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2019-20(I)/ub2019-20/eb/stat3a.pdf)

Schemes run by the State of Uttar Pradesh

Apart from several centrally sponsored schemes running all over the India, the state of Uttar Pradesh is pioneer in implementing the self-sponsored schemes for the under privileged De-notified and Nomadic tribes living in the circumference of the state. They are as:

1. Ashram Paddhati Vidyalaya

Uttar Pradesh has adopted the Ashram Padhati Vidyalaya programme. The purpose of this scheme is to improve the educational opportunities for students from Scheduled Castes, Vimukta Jati, Other Backward Classes, and General Category. Students in grades 1 to 12 receive free education, housing, food, clothing, stationery, and sports facilities (40 students in each class). The government has approved 90 ashram schools, with 76 now operational and 14 under development.

2. Industrial Training Centers (for DNTs)

The centre, first began on April 1, 1986 in the Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, teaches handloom jute work, stitching and tailoring, and Hindi language learning to students from de-notified communities. As part of the system, each centre receives 20 students and conducts training. A monthly scholarship of ₹ 150 is open to all students.

De-notified Tribes Listed in Uttar Pradesh

According to National Commission for De-notified Nomadic And Semi- Nomadic Tribes, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New Delhi under chairmanship of Shri B.R. Idate, the following communities were grouped under the term De-notified Tribes of Uttar Pradesh. A total of 59 communities were finally listed and grouped in light of the earlier commissions.

Table 2: List of De-notified tribes present in the state of Uttar Pradesh

1. Aabhiya	16. Brijvasi	31. Kaparia	46. Musar (Vanmanush)
2. Aheria (Bahelia), Behelia	17. Chamar	32. Karmangia (Hindu Mahavat)	47. Nut or Karnatak
3. Audhar	18. Chamarmangta	33. Karbal	48. PalwarDusadh
4. Badak	19. DaleshKahar	34. Kevat	49. Parwal
5. Bairiya, Bedia	20. Dargi	35. Khatik, Khateek	50. Pasi
6. Banjara	21. Dom	36. Khurpalta	51. Pighia
7. Bansi	22. Gadola	37. Kigiriya	52. Santia
8. Barvar	23. Ghosi (Hindu)	38. Kunkali	53. Tagabhat
9. Bavaria, Bawaria	24. Godnahr	39. Lodh	54. Vaid
10. Beldar	25. Gosain	40. LonaChamar	55. Sapera
11. Bhar	26. Gujjar	41. Madari	56. Siknigar
12. Bhantu	27. Habura	42. MahavatTathaLungipathan	57. Singhiwala
13. Bhat	28. Jog	43. Mallah	58. Khangar (In Bundelkhand)
14. Bhatri	29. Kanjar, Kanjad or Kuchbangia	44. Mewati	59. Lambh
15. Boria	30. Kalandar, Faqir	45. Mugia (Mung)	-

Nomadic Tribes Listed in Uttar Pradesh

In the list of Nomadic tribes in Uttar Pradesh 29 communities were listed (as such taken) from the report of the National Commission for De-notified Nomadic and Semi- Nomadic Tribes.

Table 3: List of Nomadic Tribes present in the state of Uttar Pradesh

1. Bhantu	16. Gandhila
2. Bahrupia/Baharupi /Bahurupia/ Behrupia/ Bahurupia	17. Irani

3. Bairagi	18. Kalabaz
4. Bajaniya	19. Kewat or Mallah
5. Banjara (Muslim)	20. Korwa
6. Bansphor	21. Mirasi
7. Basor	22. Musahar
8. Bhand	23. Nalband , Sais
9. Bhuiya	24. Naqqal Muslim
10. Charwaha	25. Patharkat/PatharkutKanjar
11. Dafali	26. Puliwale
12. Dharkar	27. Raji
13. Gaderia	28. Sansiya
14. Gadhia	29. Sayee/Sai (Muslim)
15. Gaddi, Ghosi	

State Wise Confirmed List of De-notified Tribes and their Category

During the analysis of Idate Commission (2017), various communities getsan affirmation from the corresponding state about their presence and absence in the respective state. The state also confirmed about their status and inclusion of the communities in state reservation category. In the table below there is a list of De-notified Tribes confirmed by the state category wise.

Table 4: List of De-notified Tribes confirmed category wise by the state

Sr. No.	Community Name	Confirmed Status under Category	Sr. No.	Community Name	Confirmed Status under Category
1.	Banjara	OBC	16.	Nat	SC
2.	Bhar	OBC	17.	Kanjar	SC
3.	DalerKahar	OBC	18.	Bhantu	SC
4.	Gandila	None	19.	Aheria (Bahelia)	SC
5.	Ghosi	OBC	20.	Chamar	SC
6.	Kevat	OBC	21.	Pasi	SC
7.	Mallah	OBC	22.	Khatik	SC
8.	Lodh (Lodhi)	OBC	23.	Habura	SC
9.	Mewati	OBC	24.	Badak	SC
10.	Audiya (Oudhia)	OBC	25.	Dom	SC
11.	Tagabhatt	None	26.	Dusadh (Palwar)	SC
12.	Musahar	OBC	27.	Barwar	SC
13.	Gujar	OBC	28.	Sansi	SC
14.	Buriah	SC	29.	Beria	SC
15.	Karwal	SC	30.	-	-

State Wise Confirmed List of Nomadic Tribes and their Category

Idate Commission (2017), analyses various communities listed in the previous reports and gets an affirmation from the corresponding state about their presence and absence in the respective state. In the report they have included the state confirmation about the status and inclusion of communities in state reservation category. In the table below there is a list of Nomadic Tribes confirmed by the state category wise.

Table 5: List of Nomadic Tribes confirmed category wise by the state

Sr. No.	Community Name	Confirmed Status under Category	Sr. No.	Community Name	Confirmed Status under Category
1.	Khurpalta	None	14.	Bhatri	None
2.	Mongia (Mong)	None	15.	Sapera (Saperia)	None
3.	Madari	OBC	16.	Kurmangia	None
4.	Singiwala	None	17.	Beldar	ST
5.	Aughar	None	18.	Kanmalia	ST
6.	Baid	None	19.	Goshain	OBC
7.	Bhat	None	20.	Goduahar	ST
8.	Chamarmangta	None	21.	LonaChamar	None
9.	Jogi	OBC	22.	Burgy	ST
10.	Joga	OBC	23.	Siqligar	None
11.	Kingiria	None	24.	Kankali	None
12.	Mahawat (Lungi Pathan)	None	25.	Brijbasi	None
13.	QulandarFaquir	OBC	26.	-	-

De-notified and Nomadic Communities not included in any Category

Apart from the listed tables given above there are a number of communities both in Nomadic as well as de-notified which are not included by the state in any category whether it is SC, St or OBC. There are 11 de-notified and 28 nomadic communities not listed by state of Uttar Pradesh in any of the scheduled category. They are listed in the table below:

Table 6: List of De-notified and Nomadic Communities not included in anyCategory in U.P.

De-notified Communities	Nomadic Communities	
1. Gandila	1. Khurpalta	15. Goduahar
2. Tagabhatt	2. Mongia	16. LonaChamar
3. Aabhiya	3. Madari	17. Burgy
4. Bansi	4. Singiwala	18. Siqligar
5. Gadola	5. Baid	19. Brijbasi
6. Dargi	6. Chamarmangta	20. Kankali
7. Khngar	7. Bhat	21. Bahrupia
8. Kunkali	8. Jogi	22. Charwala

9. Pighia	9. Joga	23. Irani
10. Vaid	10. Mahawat	24. Patharkat
11. Kigiriya	11. QulandarFaquir	25. Sai
	12. Bhatri	26. Joshi Bhaddri, Bhathari
	13. Sapera	27. Baghri
	14. Kurmangia	28. Singhadia

Conclusion and Recommendation

In the context of multiple articles and sub articles, the Indian Constitution offers a wide range of safeguards to the De-notified people. The humanistic Indian Constitution also grants various welfare initiatives to help underdeveloped, deprived, and vulnerable people attain the empowerment they need to join the mainstream. The state apparently forgot about these vulnerable people in the process of development, and these communities are now far from being developed. There is an immediate need to address societal stigmas or misconceptions about these persons. There is a need of awakening people through an invasive public awareness campaign, particularly for those who live in close proximity to these individuals. There is a need to educate and train police officers about their living conditions and livelihood, as well as their generous sacrifices for the country. There is an urgent need to train health-care providers to take care of these community people health difficulties more seriously and to provide quality care and medical benefits as soon as possible. It is imperative that policymakers provide them with reservations inside reservations so that they can be profited. It is highly advised that these people be educated, informed, and trained in order to at least make them aware of the current state & central government schemes and policies that make their lives much smoother than it used to be. There is a burning need of political reservation so that the people belonging to such community can take part in administration of their people.

These recommendations may indeed be effective in creating their existence more sustainable and happy, because when the last person in a queue benefited, it has the capability to revolutionize the character of New India.

Acknowledgement

Authors are extremely thankful to Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 15, Janpath New Delhi India for providing financial support in form of Dr. Ambedkar National Fellowship for present Post-Doctoral Research work.

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