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Marginalization and Development of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes in India: A Study with Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract: *De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs and NTs) constitute one of the most marginalized and socially excluded sections of Indian society. Historically stigmatized under the colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, these communities continued to face discrimination, poverty, social insecurity, and exclusion even after the Act was repealed and the tribes were “de-notified” in 1952. The present paper examines the socio-economic conditions, patterns of marginalization, and developmental challenges of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes in India with special reference to Uttar Pradesh. The study highlights issues related to lack of permanent settlement, inadequate access to education, healthcare, housing, identity documents, livelihood opportunities, and social security schemes. It also explores the persistence of social stigma, police harassment, and political invisibility that continue to affect these communities. The paper further analyses the policy initiatives and welfare measures undertaken by the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the upliftment of DNTs and NTs. Despite various constitutional safeguards and developmental programmes, the benefits of social justice and inclusive development have not adequately reached these communities due to poor implementation, low awareness, and weak institutional support. The study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions, community-based development strategies, educational empowerment, skill development, livelihood generation, and effective implementation of welfare schemes. It concludes that sustainable development of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes requires a rights-based and inclusive approach aimed at ensuring dignity, social protection, and equal participation in the mainstream development process.*

Key words: De-notified and Nomadic Tribes, Marginalisation of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes.

Introduction- India is a heterogeneous nation, characterised by a profound cultural legacy and intricate social structure, enriched by its numerous ethnic groups, each possessing distinct cultures, languages, and customs (Zehol, 2008; Ford & Kelly, 2005). However, within this context exists an issue impacting the De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic (DNT) populations, whose identities are diminishing and who confront existential distress (Radhakrishna, 2007). The DNT communities comprise many ethnic groups characterised by distinct cultures, dialects, and lifestyles. These populations were traditionally designated as "criminal tribes" under the Colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, a stigma that persists even after India's independence (Safdar, 2020). Despite the repeal of the Act in 1952 and the reclassification from "criminal tribes" to "de-notified tribes," social marginalisation and economic suffering persisted. Notwithstanding their substantial presence, these groups persistently encounter complex issues that result in their marginalisation. It is essential to comprehend their suffering and implement strategies to enhance their social inclusion in order to cultivate a more equal society. The National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (2005), chaired by Balkrishna Renake, was created to propose effective solutions for the advancement of DNTs. The commission's 2008 report contained substantial ideas aimed at enhancing the position of DNTs across several domains, including education, employment, political representation, and housing. A primary proposal was to implement a reservation system for DNTs in government services, promotions, and legislative entities like Parliament, Assemblies, Local Civic Bodies, and Panchayats. The commission additionally recommended a distinct budget for the development of DNTs, the formation of a DNT Development Corporation, the establishment of residential schools, financial loans and scholarships for higher education, and a dedicated fund along with a 7% reservation for DNTs in various Government Housing Schemes. Furthermore, it underscored the urgent necessity to acknowledge DNT Tandas (inhabitants) as revenue villages. The panel advocated changing the Constitution to establish a 7 percent reserve for DNTs, who do not belong to the SC/ST group, inside the 27% reservation quota designated for OBCs, therefore allowing them to access government programs and schemes like to those available for SCs and STs (Renake, 2008).

A report was issued in 2017 by the panel chaired by Bhiku Ramji Idate. The research classified the DNTs as a very disadvantaged population experiencing poverty, marginalisation, social stigma, and isolation. The panel advised the inclusion of DNTs, NTs, and SNTs under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, for their protection. The panel proposed a Constitutional change to include Scheduled DNT/NT/SNT as a third group following Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Act. The commission emphasised the past injustices endured by these



populations. Under colonial governance, they were designated as criminals under to the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Despite the repeal of the Act upon independence, successive laws persisted in displacing people from their usual jobs and residences. The panel advocated for the publication of the 2011 caste census, particularly about the DNT, NT, and SNT groups, to facilitate focused strategies for their advancement (Idate, 2017).

The De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic (DNT) groups of India have been traditionally marginalised and overlooked, while being an essential component of the nation's cultural fabric. They persistently encounter complex obstacles that hinder their social and economic progress. The absence of adequate identification, documentation, and access to vital services sustains a cycle of poverty and isolation, intensifying their vulnerability. Nonetheless, national commissions and government programs, such as the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of De-notified Tribes (DNTs) - SEED, indicate an increasing acknowledgement of the necessity to cater to the distinct requirements of DNT groups. To mainstream DNTs and promote inclusive development and social inclusion, it is essential to implement comprehensive interventions targeting education, healthcare, economic empowerment, legislative changes, and governmental assistance. Policymakers, civil society groups, and stakeholders must collaborate to implement these solutions and guarantee that DNT populations have the dignity, rights, and opportunities they justly deserve in a multicultural nation such as India.

De-notified, nomadic, and tribal groups are the most overlooked and marginalised segments of Indian society. They have been victims of shame, societal neglect, and exploitation for millennia. Despite decades of independence, people still lack fundamental necessities of existence. Women among them endure the most suffering. The majority lack access to healthcare facilities and various government programs/services. They endure several atrocities perpetrated not just by individuals from other cultures but also by members of their own family. This element of Indian society exists on the margins of all types of contemporary progress. They are devoid of essential documentation required for state aid, fundamental amenities such as potable water, sanitation and bathing facilities, power, contemporary education, and healthcare services, and are frequently situated in improvised and tent encampments on the peripheries of communities and cities.

De-notified, nomadic and tribal communities are the most neglected and marginalized sections of Indian society. They are victims of stigma, social neglect and exploitation for centuries. Even after so many decades of Independence, they lack even the most basic amenities of life. Women among them suffer the most. Most of them don't have access to health care facilities and other government schemes/ services. They suffer from a number of atrocities not only by people of other communities but within their own families. This segment of Indian society is on the periphery of all forms of modern development. They lack basic documents to receive state assistance, basic amenities such as drinking water, toilet and bathroom facilities, electricity, modern education, and healthcare services, and are commonly found living in makeshift and tent settlements on the outskirts of villages and towns.

Objectives and Methods- The paper primarily aims to examine the socio-economic conditions, historical exclusion, and continuing marginalization of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs and NTs) in India, with particular focus on the state of Uttar Pradesh. The study seeks to analyse the nature of social, economic, educational, and political deprivation experienced by these communities and to assess the extent of their access to development programmes, social justice measures, welfare schemes, education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and legal protections. The paper also attempts to highlight the challenges arising from stigma, displacement, identity issues, lack of documentation, poor awareness, and inadequate representation in policy frameworks. Further, it aims to suggest suitable policy interventions and developmental strategies for the inclusive growth and empowerment of DNTs and NTs.

The study is mainly based on secondary sources of data. Information has been collected from government reports, Census data, reports of commissions and committees, research articles, books, journals, policy documents, and various published and unpublished sources related to De-notified and Nomadic Tribes in India and Uttar Pradesh. The research methodology also includes a critical review of existing literature to understand the historical background, socio-economic realities, policy initiatives, and gaps in development concerning these marginalized communities. Analytical and descriptive approaches have been used to interpret the available information and to present a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to marginalization and development of DNTs and NTs.

Contemporary State of De-notified Tribes in India- Even if the de-notified tribes now have a newfound recognition thanks to the repeal of criminal tribe legislation, the stigma associated with



criminality still exists and has a significant influence on their identity today (Bokil, 2002:150). Although the term "criminal tribe" was formally removed from police and government registers in the postcolonial era, the public's and administrative officials' perceptions of the de-notified tribe remained unaltered (Bokil, 2002). The DNTs' existence in society is nevertheless stereotyped, with some people still viewing them as criminals or as having some sort of criminal or disreputable connotation (Radhakrishna, 2009). This has led to a situation in the postcolonial era where the identity that the colonial government imposed mainly on the nomadic society's segments has, in a sense, become their original identity, removing significant opportunities to address their cultural life and historical discrimination in comparison to other marginalised groups like Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Furthermore, even though de-notified became a recognised identity for the former criminal tribes, the state never classified them as a single group; instead, they were mostly added to the SC, ST, or OBC lists, or sometimes none at all. Not all ex-criminal tribe groups fall under the Vimukta Jati Nomadic Tribe (VJNT) category, which is the only classification used in uncommon states like Maharashtra. The National Commission (1953), "de-notified tribes" took the place of the term "criminal tribe" (Viswanathan, 2002). Social groups that don't have permanent residences and are always on the move in search of work opportunities are known as nomadic communities (NTs). Herding, fishing, and collecting forest products are frequently their main pursuits (Pant, 2005). Conversely, social groupings that adopt semi-settled lives and move between two or more locations on a regular basis throughout the year are known as semi-nomadic communities (SNTs). They may spend a certain amount of time in their home base, but for seasonal jobs or other reasons, they move to different places (Renke, 2008; Idate, 2017).

Following India's independence, the government launched a number of programs to help these communities deal with their problems. To address the problems these communities faced, a number of commissions and committees were formed, including the Justice Venkatachaliah Commission (2002), the Mandal Commission (1980), and the Lokur Committee (1965). The National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes was subsequently established in 2005 to look for suitable solutions for the DNTs' advancement, with Balkrishna Renake serving as its supervisor. When the commission's report was released in 2008, it included important recommendations for raising DNTs' status in a number of areas, such as housing, political representation, work, and education. A reservation system for DNTs in government jobs, promotions, and legislative bodies including Parliament, Assemblies, Local Civic Bodies, and Panchayats was one of the main proposals. The commission also supported the creation of residential schools, a DNT Development Corporation, a separate budget for DNT development, financial loans and scholarships for higher education, a dedicated fund, and a 7 percent reservation for DNTs in various government housing schemes. It further highlighted how vital it is that DNT Tandras (residents) be recognised as revenue villages. In order to allow DNTs who do not belong to the SC/ST category to utilise government programs and schemes similar to those for SCs and STs, the commission also suggested amending the Constitution to include a 7 percent reservation for them within the 27 percent quota allotted for OBCs (Renake, 2008).

The government's measures failed to make significant headway in spite of the Renake Commission's recommendations. The Indian government then created the Idate Commission, also known as the National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic Tribes, in 2015. This commission's duties included identifying these communities by state, evaluating their level of development, and suggesting ways to improve them. The DNTs were identified as the most poor, disadvantaged, and oppressed communities at risk of social stigma, atrocity, and exclusion in the commission's 2017 report, which was issued under the direction of Bhiku Ramji Idate. In addition to proposing a constitutional amendment to incorporate Scheduled DNT/NT/SNT as a third group after Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Act, the panel proposed that DNTs, NTs, and SNTs be protected under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Additionally, it emphasised the historical burden these people bear because, under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, they were formerly labelled criminals during colonial administration. Even after the Act was repealed after independence, they were nevertheless forcibly evicted from their traditional homes and jobs by later laws. In order to inform specific strategies for the development of the DNT, NT, and SNT groups, the commission also demanded that the 2011 caste census be made public (Idate, 2017). The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of De-notified Tribes (DNTs), or SEED, was introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2022. The scheme's main goals included giving DNT/NT/SNT candidates excellent coaching so they could take competitive exams, providing health insurance to DNT/NT/SNT communities, supporting livelihood projects at the community level to support



small groups of DNT/NT/SNT community institutions, and giving money to members of these communities to build houses (Lakshman, 2022; Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, 2022).

These groups still experience severe difficulties and hardships even in the post-independence age. Among other crucial issues, these populations suffer from a shortage of suitable housing, legitimate identification documents, quality education, and stable employment. For the majority of these populations, the current circumstances have led to economic deprivation, marginalisation, and extreme poverty (Agrawal, 2015; Hasan, 2020). The fact that these communities, like the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), are not officially recognised as a separate group is another significant problem. The majority of these groups remain unrecognised and unaccounted for, despite the fact that some governments have incorporated particular communities under the constitutional categories of SC and ST (Bokil, 2002). Their ethnic identification is greatly impacted by this lack of enumeration (Korra, 2017; Gowda, 2023).

These communities are frequently sparsely distributed throughout different locations and suffer from a lack of recognition. Due to the persistent societal stigma caused by past affiliations with criminality, many members of the community choose to hide their true identities or blend in with other groups in order to avoid the prejudice that goes along with it (Gandhi and Sundar, 2019). These populations nevertheless experience bias, marginalisation, and discrimination from others in spite of their best efforts to fit in, which negatively impacts their social and economic prospects as well as their mental and physical health. Seeking constitutional legitimacy, gaining access to government welfare programs, and aiming for a higher social standing are only a few of the many aspects of these communities' identity issues (Torgalkar, 2016). These factors highlight how difficult and crucial it is to solve the identity-related issues that these communities face.

The United Nations estimates that 20 percent of people on Earth are nomads. The National Commission on De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNSNT) estimates that there are 249 de-notified nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in India, which together make up about 13 crore people. According to the research, 1262 settlements nationwide have been classified as De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic groups. Overall, 810 nomadic tribes, twenty-seven semi-nomadic tribes, and 425 de-notified tribes make up the list of De-notified, semi-nomadic and nomadic tribes in India. With 73 nomadic communities, Maharashtra is the most nomadic state. There are 56 nomadic communities in the second-ranked state of Karnataka. However, the majority of these communities are currently listed as SC/ST under the Indian Constitution. These neighbourhoods have yet to reap the rewards of the government's affirmative action policy. The most progressive segments of Indian society are not aware of the predicament of India's nomads, despite the fact that they comprise around 7 percent of the country's population. The broad intellectual and historical discourse in India has failed to comprehend the nomadic groups' attitudes towards sedentary civilisation, their comprehension of ecologies, their worldviews, social structures, and social connections (Mishra and Prabhakar, 2011).

De-notified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes and Semi Nomadic Tribes are one of the most deprived and economically weaker communities in India. There are historical reasons for this. The misery of these communities began with the enactment of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 during the British rule. This Act was the most draconian law passed by the British colonial state, under which millions of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities were declared criminals and put under continuous surveillance, making their lives impossible. These communities were subjugated, persecuted and neglected. The policies of the colonial government affected lives and livelihood adversely. Little did the colonial state realize the plight of these communities after they were branded as criminals under various colonial Acts. This led to the forcible alienation from their traditional occupations and habitations. They remained hunter gatherers and pastoral/peripatetic. Historically, these communities never had access to private land or home ownership. These tribes used forests and grazing lands for their livelihood and residential use and had "strong ecological connections. Many of them are dependent upon various types of natural resources and carve out intricate ecological niches for their survival. The changes in ecology and environment seriously affect their livelihood options. These tribes have barely benefitted from the planned developments since the Indian independence. So far, they have been deprived of state support like the SCs/STs. Various efforts are being undertaken by the government for bringing these communities in the main stream.

De-notified tribes, nomadic tribes, and semi-nomadic tribes in India are among the most impoverished and economically disadvantaged groups. This is due to historical factors. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which was passed during British administration, marked the beginning of these groups' suffering. Millions of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities were labelled criminals and placed under constant surveillance under this Act, the worst law ever established by the British colonial power, making



their life difficult. These groups suffered from neglect, persecution, and subjugation. The colonial government's policies had a negative impact on people's livelihoods and means of subsistence. After these communities were labelled criminals under several colonial Acts, the colonial authorities were unaware of their predicament. As a result, they were forcibly removed from their customary homes and places of employment. They continued to be pastoral/peripatetic and hunter-gatherers. In the past, these communities were never able to own homes or access private land. These tribes had "strong ecological connections" and relied on woods and grazing areas for both residential and commercial purposes. In order to survive, many of them create complex ecological niches and rely on a variety of natural resources. Their alternatives for a living are significantly impacted by the ecological and environmental changes.

Welfare Measures for Empowering DNTs and NTs and SNTs- According to the report of the National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes submitted to the Government of India in 2017–18, a total of 1,262 De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities were identified across the country. These include 425 De-notified Tribes (DNTs), 810 Nomadic Tribes (NTs) and 27 Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs). The Commission prepared a comprehensive state-wise list to facilitate welfare planning, social justice measures and targeted development interventions. The distribution of these communities varies significantly across states. States such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra have a large concentration of De-notified and Nomadic communities. Karnataka reported the highest number of De-notified communities (85), while Tamil Nadu recorded 68 De-notified and 60 Nomadic communities. Gujarat had 52 Nomadic communities, whereas Rajasthan reported a substantial number of Semi-Nomadic communities (13), one of the highest in the country. In northern India, Uttar Pradesh recorded 31 De-notified and 18 Nomadic communities, while Uttarakhand had 25 De-notified and 21 Nomadic communities. Bihar reported 50 Nomadic communities, and Punjab identified 9 De-notified and 23 Nomadic communities. In southern India, Kerala was among the few states reporting Semi-Nomadic communities in addition to De-notified and Nomadic groups (Table 1). The Commission observed that these communities remain among the most socially and economically marginalized sections of Indian society due to historical stigma, inadequate access to education, housing, livelihood opportunities and social security schemes. Many of these groups were earlier notified under the colonial-era Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and were officially “de-notified” after Independence in 1952, yet social exclusion and discrimination continue in many regions.

Table 1: State/ UTs Wise Number of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities in India

S. No.	State/UT	De-notified Communities	Nomadic Communities	Semi-Nomadic Communities
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	6	0
2	Andhra Pradesh	26	34	0
3	Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	0
4	Assam	0	0	0
5	Bihar	3	50	0
6	Chandigarh	2	31	0
7	Chhattisgarh	11	17	0
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	4	0
9	Daman and Diu	0	4	0
10	NCT of Delhi	29	26	0
11	Goa	0	2	0
12	Gujarat	13	52	0
13	Haryana	14	35	0
14	Himachal Pradesh	0	41	0
15	Jammu & Kashmir	0	14	0
16	Jharkhand	5	39	0
17	Karnataka	85	76	0
18	Kerala	1	21	9
19	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
20	Madhya Pradesh	20	31	0
21	Maharashtra	14	40	0
22	Manipur	0	0	0
23	Meghalaya	0	2	0



24	Mizoram	0	2	0
25	Nagaland	0	0	1
26	Odisha	11	31	0
27	Puducherry	0	13	0
28	Punjab	9	23	0
29	Rajasthan	13	29	13
30	Sikkim	0	5	4
31	Tamil Nadu	68	60	0
32	Telangana	36	36	0
33	Tripura	0	14	0
34	Uttar Pradesh	31	18	0
35	Uttarakhand	25	21	0
36	West Bengal	8	32	0
	Grand Total	425	810	27

Source: Report of the National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, submitted in December 2017. The information was provided by Virendra Kumar in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

Since India gained its freedom, these tribes have hardly benefited from planned advancements. Like the SCs and STs, they have not received state assistance up to this point. The government is making a number of attempts to integrate these communities into society.

For the benefit of De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Communities, the Government of India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment introduced the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) on February 15, 2022. With an estimated cost of Rs. 200 crores, the SEED Scheme would be implemented over five years, from 2021–2022 to 2025–2026.

The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) consists of four parts:

1. Educational Empowerment: To support these communities' educational empowerment, a free coaching component for DNT students has been envisioned. This component's goal is to give DNT students high-quality coaching so they may take competitive exams and get admitted to professional programs like engineering, medical, and MBA, among others, in order to land a suitable position in the public or private sector. Through the web portal, a system-generated merit list will be used to choose the candidates for each course. In five years, this component will provide free coaching to about 6250 pupils. Over the course of five years, a total of Rs. 50 crores will be spent.

2. Health Insurance: People in DNT, NT, and SNT communities probably don't have much or any access to the medical services and other benefits that are provided by conventional health programs. The scheme's main goal is to give the National Health Authority (NHA) and State Health Agencies (SHAs) financial support so they can start offering DNT, NT, and SNT families health insurance coverage of Rs. 5.0 lakhs per family annually in accordance with the guidelines of the "Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana." In five years, about 4,44,500 families will have health insurance coverage. Over the course of five years, a total of Rs. 49.0 crores will be spent.

3. Promote Livelihoods: DNT/NT/SNT communities' poverty has been made worse by the loss of their customary jobs. It is necessary to concentrate on helping these communities generate a living. The scheme's main goal is to give the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) financial support so that it may create institutions at the community level in collaboration with the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) of state governments and UTs. Through investments in institutional support and technical assistance, a livelihood initiative is being carried out to increase productivity growth in important livelihood sectors for the creation of jobs for DNT/NT/SNT communities. In five years, about 2000 clusters will profit from this component.

4. Accommodation: The DNT/NT towns currently lack permanent shelters for a significant number of families. Many DNT groups are attempting to settle down and pursue alternate careers in light of their shifting socioeconomic situation. It has been shown that DNTs reside in both urban and rural slum situations across the nation. Given the lack of housing for DNTs, it has been suggested that a separate PMAY budget be set aside to assist the particular need to build homes exclusively for DNTs residing in rural regions who have not yet benefited from the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Per unit aid, the acceptable support is Rs 1.20 lakhs in plains and Rs 1.30 lakhs in mountainous areas. In five years, about 4,200 homes will be built under this component. Over the course of five years, a total of Rs. 50 crores will be spent.



The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, has been allocated an improved budget outlay of Rs. 11922.5 crores for the 2022–2023, a significant increase of 14.6 percent above the previous total budget outlay of Rs. 10180 crores for 2021–2022. Nanaji Deshmukh's plan to build hostels for DNT girls and boys. Launched in 2014–15, this officially financed program is being carried out by state governments, UT administrations, and central universities. In order to enable DNT students who are not covered by SC, ST, or OBC to pursue secondary and higher education, the Scheme seeks to provide hostel facilities. The annual income threshold for eligibility is Rs. 2 lakhs. A maximum of 500 seats will be distributed nationwide each year by the Central Government. According to the scheme, the cost of the hostel is Rs. 3 lakh per seat (between the State and the Centre in a 75:25 ratio), and the cost of the furniture is Rs. 5,000 per seat. Ambedkar, Dr. One program that is being developed for the benefit of children who belong to DNTs is the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs. While SCs, STs, and OBCs were able to profit from reservations, scholarships, and other programs, these DNTs—those who are not covered by SC, ST, or OBC—do not have access to any such welfare programs. The plan aims to enhance these classes' lives and empower them on a social and economic level by implementing targeted interventions. The essence of this plan is permanent and ongoing. Individual recipients who are not covered by any scheme are the target of the scholarship programs. The funding would be made available to state governments, UT administrations, universities, and colleges that serve the needs of students from DNT areas.

Status of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes in Uttar Pradesh- Even though they are an essential component of the country's cultural mosaic, the De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic (DNT) populations have long been marginalised and ignored. They still have to deal with a variety of issues that prevent them from advancing socially and economically. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by the cycle of poverty and exclusion that is maintained by improper recognition, documentation, and access to necessary resources. Comprehensive interventions centred on healthcare, education, economic empowerment, legislative reforms, and government assistance are essential for mainstreaming DNTs and promoting inclusive development and social inclusion. To put these answers into practice and guarantee that DNT communities receive the respect, rights, and opportunities they so richly merit in a multicultural nation such as India, policymakers, civil society organisations, and stakeholders must cooperate. Their ancient traditional skills, livelihoods, and way of life are becoming less significant and valuable as a result of modern technology and the commercialisation of social connections. Bias and marginalisation have prevented De-notified and Nomadic populations from receiving education, as well as other rights and benefits that would have allowed them to acquire new skills and accumulate assets for moving into other professions. Today many De-notified and wandering groups are forced to lead a wandering lifestyle since the alternative is unattainable. India's social and economic growth has benefited greatly from the contributions of nomadic tribes and de-notified tribal populations. They make up a sizable portion of the labour force that builds and maintains cities, including construction workers, housekeepers, janitors, factory workers, entertainers, and so forth. In Uttar Pradesh, especially in the eastern region, the nomadic, semi-nomadic, de-notified, and other tribal communities—including the Kol, Oraon, Korba, Ghasia, Mushar, Nat, Patharkata, Bhil, Bahelia, and Lohar—are marginalised and lag behind in terms of socioeconomic development metrics. Since these castes are categorised as PVTG or Scheduled Tribes in the bordering states, they are fighting for their identity and inclusion as Scheduled Tribes in the state.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Kol, Oraon, Korba, and Ghasia castes are marginalised and lag behind in terms of socioeconomic development metrics, especially in the Sonebhadra area. Since these castes are categorised as PVTG or Scheduled Tribes in the neighbouring states, they are fighting for their identity and inclusion as Scheduled Tribes in the state. Therefore, in order for the government to take action to reschedule them as Scheduled Tribes in the state, an anthropological study of their biological, sociocultural, linguistic, and economic status is essential. The jungles of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh's Sonebhadra, Mirzapur, Chitrakoot, Satna, and Reeva districts are home to Kol Adivasis. In each of these nearby regions, Kols are able to cross over and establish familial ties. Since the Madhya Pradesh government has designated them as a Scheduled Tribe, they are eligible for all the benefits that a tribal group in that state ought to have, including access to the forest and rights to minor forest products. The Kols were battling for their tribal identity in Uttar Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh, the Kols are categorised as a Scheduled Caste despite their anthropological tribalism. Not only has this robbed them of their traditional source of income—the forest—but it has also rendered them landless and dependant on silica quarries and sand mining. The Kols mostly reside in the impoverished Bundelkhand region, which borders Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, in the districts of Allahabad, Banda, Chitrakoot, Mirzapur, Sonebhadra, Satna, and Rewa. Despite being divided by



exogamous clans, they live in patriarchal societies and operate similarly. In Madhya Pradesh, they have been granted tribal status. To ensure their long-term progress, a Kol development agency was founded last year. Its main goals were better schooling, housing, community sheds, health screenings, employment, and programs centred around forest products. About 19,000 Kols are thought to live in the Sonebhadra district, with the majority of them residing in the Ghorawal development block.

The Oraon tribe, sometimes called Kurukh due to their language and script, are indigenous people who have long resided in the Chotanagpur area of Jharkhand. They cultivate crops and are the second largest tribe after the Santhalis. They customarily practise Dharmes/Sarna, which includes worshipping nature, ghosts, and ancestors. The majority of their rituals and beliefs have been influenced by Christianity and Hinduism. The multiplicity of religious views has hindered the acceptance of new secular conceptions. A fresh perspective on marriage, starting a family, and having children was also brought about by it. Catholicism is dedicated to reviving traditional culture since it is essentially conservative (Muller, 1972 and Quillan, 2004). As a result, it prohibits the authorised use of fertility control from impacting the community's culture, therefore managing their general identity and normal conduct. The Sonebhadra district's Chatra and Nagwa development blocks are home to the majority of Oraons. It is believed that 18,000 people live there. In Uttar Pradesh, the southern regions of Sonebhadra and Mirzapur are home to a number of tribal people, including the Ghasia. They claim that they were once monarchs but that they started cultivating after losing their power. Some tales claim that the name Ghasiya, which comes from the Hindi word Ghahus, which means grass, meaning grass cutter. They are among the several tribal communities in the hilly southern region of Uttar Pradesh, primarily near Mirzapur and Sonebadhra. The Surguja region of Madhya Pradesh is where the Ghasiya tribe says they originated. Their tales talk of a time when they were rulers, but that they finally lost power and turned to farming. Clan exogamy is the concept that the endogamous Ghasiya adhere to. These clans, which include the Arilkhanda, Banger, Bhainsa, Janta, Katihari, Sonwan, and Surajbansi, are primarily Kuris. The Sonwan derive their name from the Hindi word "sona," which means gold, and assert that they belong to a higher social class. There are origin myths for other clans as well. For instance, it is believed that the godling Bhainsasur is the source of the name Bhainsa. Despite being Hindus, they worship their own tribal deities, including Burhimai, Dulhadeo, and Sheetla Devi. The Bundelkhandi dialect of Hindi is spoken by the Ghasiya. One small group of landowners is the Ghasiya. Among the Ghasiya, grass-cutters are still in demand. The mandau, a kind of comb, is also produced by a large number of people. They rarely engage with the community surrounding them because they live in their own communities. The Korwa are a Munda ethnic group from India. The majority of them reside near the border between Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. There are also a few Korwa in the Uttar Pradesh districts of Mirzapur and Sonebhadra. The Indian government has supplied them with a range of amenities, including roads to their towns, boy's hostels for schooling, agricultural subsidies, and so forth. They are part of a hunter-gatherer culture. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh are home to the majority of the Korwas, a Scheduled Tribe. Nonetheless, it is a socially and economically impoverished tribe. Most of these tribes are hunters and gatherers, and they are nomadic. Robertsganj and Nagwa development blocks of Sonebhadra district are the primary locations for Ghasiya.

The Korwa are said to have been the original inhabitants of Madhya Pradesh's Surguja district. Prior to the arrival of more strong and numerous conquerors, they were known as chiefs and served as leaders in the area in the early 1900s. They were then accused of being a gang that was stealing. The two main Korwa tribes are the Paharia (or Benwaria), who live in the hills, and the Diharia (or Kisan), who are farmers. These two groups do not marry each other. The Indian government has designated the Korwa people as "scheduled tribes". The Korwa people inhabit in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh's hills, valleys, and forests. Their native Korwa language was once spoken by them. The majority of Korwa people work in agriculture. In the past, they engaged in slash-and-burn farming, moving to cultivate freshly cleared territory every two or three years. Vegetables, millet, and rice were the principal crops. To supplement their income, they sold forest products, particularly firewood. In recent years, a lot of people have become farmers. Due to their remote location and lack of communication, the Paharia Korwa (hill dwellers) have been reduced to the status of farm labourers. Not many of them possess land of their own. Both local tribe and non-tribal groups have mortgaged a significant portion of their land. Korwa farmers rarely have agricultural surpluses to market. When they do go to market, astute traders exploit their ignorance and illiteracy by purchasing their items at absurdly low prices and charging them high interest rates for loans. People from several ethnic groups live in the villages where plains inhabitants reside. Wooden or bush fences enclose their farms or homesteads. The hill-dwelling Korwa still lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The family is the most fundamental



social unit among the Korwa. They follow a traditional family structure where everyone respects the father's word and it is the law. Both men and women are free to choose their spouses, but the bride price is high and must be paid by the groom's family. Newlyweds live with the groom's parents until they can afford to live on their own. The vast majority of the Korwa community resides in Chhattisgarh. There is a significant minority in western Jharkhand, which has a population of 35,606. The southern districts of Mirzapur and Sonebhadra are home to the majority of Uttar Pradesh's Korwa population. They inhabit an area that is steep, wooded, and rolling. The community is divided into four subgroups: the Agaria Korwa, Dam Korwa, Dih Korwa, and Pahar Korwa. The seven exogamous clans are Munda, Mura, Leth, Guleria, Haril, Huhar, and Pahari. The Korwa are one of the most isolated groups in Uttar Pradesh, and the majority of them still hunt and gather. A small percentage have become farmers and are blending in with Hindu culture. They do, however, have their own god; the goddess is worshipped at a Diwar family shrine in each of their communities.

Korwa is a devotee of Satbahini Devi. The Pahadia Korwa septs are Hezda, Samati, Edikhar, and Madikhar. You can marry and eat with these. Majhi, Dhanuhar, and Dewanihar are the established Deharia Korwas. The one-room mud houses of the Hill Korwas have verandas where they may sleep and cook. Two-room houses are available. There is a thatched and tiled version. The kumba is a spherical, conical house. Sal leaves and grass make up thatch. It is a one-room dwelling with fencing. Tattoos are applied to the wrists, neck, legs, ankles, and above the breasts for both men and women, but not to the forehead or back. Men dress in loin cloths. Their mother tongue is Korwa. Other names are Ernga and Singli. Locals of Korwa refer to their language as Bhashi. Munda-Austroasiatic is the name of this language. Sadri and Chhattisgarhi are also spoken by Korwa. The Korba of Jharkhand are backwards. Korwa are poor, disadvantaged castes from Madhya Pradesh in Jharkhand. This branch of the Munda is said to be growing westward. There are sizable Korba communities in Jashpur and Sarguja, Madhya Pradesh. In Jharkhand's mountainous areas of Garhwa, Palamu, and Latehar, Korba can be found in woods that provide TB, as well as fruit, flowers, herbs, and other plants. Banopajs are numerous. Korba is in Simdega and Gumla. Other districts occasionally show up. Their strongholds in Jharkhand's Garhwa district are Ghurki, Bhandaria, Chainpur, and Mahuataand. In addition, the Korba people reside in Mirzapur and Sonebhadra in Uttar Pradesh, as well as Rohtas, Bhojpur, Purnia, and Munger in Bihar. They are mostly found in the Sonebhadra district's Myorpur development block. It is believed about 10,000 people live there. Many of these tribes still lack basic human rights and are socially and economically marginalised. Additionally, the De-notified or Nomadic Tribes are not mentioned in the Indian Constitution. It is limited to the Backward Classes, Scheduled Tribes, and Scheduled Castes. Thus, with the exception of a few states like Maharashtra and Gujarat, the social sector management has mostly ignored the De-notified and Nomadic Tribes. It has also been painfully noted that despite the fact that many of these Tribes and Communities are listed as SCs, STs, and BCs/OBCs, they have not been able to benefit from the affirmative action programs that the Union and the States have occasionally introduced because of their ignorance and illiteracy. Consequently, these communities remain the most vulnerable and underprivileged segment of Indian society.

The inclusion of the indigenous people in the process of progress has been a priority since the planning phase began. However, when fresh insights were gained from other developmental endeavours, the approach evolved with each Five-Year Plan. The capacity of indigenous people to harness the fruits of development and to utilise various systems for delivery of public goods and services has remained limited. As a result, those in charge of tribal development are receiving less expertise support. Tribal populations are growing in urban areas, yet there is no organisation to address their unique issues. There is a dearth of literature and empirical study findings regarding the influence of policies on tribal groups in Uttar Pradesh, despite the government having implemented numerous programs and plans for their welfare and development. Examining the situation of these tribal communities and their mainstreaming in development initiatives is crucial because a number of the state's de-notified communities have been added to the Scheduled Tribes list.

Conclusion- The issue of the criminalisation and marginalisation of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) in India reflects a long history of social exclusion, colonial prejudice, and institutional discrimination. The complexity of this problem arises from the diverse nature of nomadic communities, the colonial policies that labelled several communities as "criminal tribes" under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, and the continuation of stigma even after independence. Although the Act was repealed in 1952 and the notified communities were officially de-notified, the historical legacy of criminalisation continues to influence their social, economic, and political status in contemporary India. A comprehensive theoretical and



policy framework addressing the concerns of DNTs as a distinct category of marginalised communities still remains inadequate. While Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes have received constitutional recognition and institutional support, many DNT communities continue to face exclusion from mainstream welfare mechanisms, inadequate legal protection, police harassment, poor educational attainment, unemployment, lack of identity documents, and limited access to social security schemes.

The paper highlights that despite constitutional commitments to equality and social justice, DNT communities in Uttar Pradesh continue to experience severe socioeconomic deprivation. According to the Renke Commission (2008), India has a large population of nomadic, semi-nomadic, and de-notified tribes, with Uttar Pradesh having a significant concentration of such communities. The updated list issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment further indicates the presence of several De-notified and Nomadic Tribes in the state. The findings of the study reveal that these communities remain socially isolated and economically vulnerable due to low literacy, insecure livelihoods, poor housing conditions, lack of healthcare facilities, and limited participation in development programmes.

The paper concludes that meaningful inclusion of DNT communities requires targeted and sustained policy interventions. There is a need for a separate and comprehensive national policy for De-notified and Nomadic Tribes focusing on education, employment, housing, healthcare, and social security. Special attention should be given to providing identity documents, ensuring access to welfare schemes, and protecting these communities from police harassment and social discrimination. Educational support through scholarships, residential schools, skill development programmes, and awareness campaigns should be strengthened to improve their human development indicators. Further, livelihood promotion initiatives, reservation benefits, political representation, and community-based rehabilitation programmes are essential for their social integration and empowerment. The paper also recommends strengthening legal safeguards and conducting regular socio-economic surveys to ensure evidence-based policymaking. Only through inclusive development strategies and recognition of their historical injustices can De-notified and Nomadic Tribes be effectively mainstreamed into Indian society and achieve dignity, equality, and sustainable development.

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