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## **Reaching out to the Nomadic Communities: Exploring Policies and Strategies of Inclusion through Census 2011**

### **Abstract**

*The tribal population of India is at widely different stages of social and economic development. The tribal spatial and cultural characteristics make them non-permanent structure so it of paramount importance to understand the nomadic aspect of the tribal communities. The nomadic communities are identified as primitive, backward tribes living in isolation as nomads or semi-nomads. These nomadic tribes irrespective of the influence of modernization, urbanization, industrialization and over all development in tribal areas are extremely backward. They have low level of economy, shattered by hunger and malnutrition, razed by diseases and tear down at multiple stages in life. Here it has become the need of the time to study the tribal demography, their location in the society, their problems of development through census 2011. This paper is an exercise to study the strategies of inclusion of the nomadic tribes in census 2011.*

**Key words: Nomadic Tribes, Census 2011, Tribal Demography and Tribal Development**

### **Introduction**

The tribal population of India is at widely different stages of social and economic development. The tribal spatial and cultural characteristics make them non-permanent structure so it of paramount importance to understand the nomadic aspect of the tribal communities. The nomadic communities are identified as primitive, backward tribes living in isolation as nomads or semi-nomads (Bose et. al., 1990). These nomadic tribes irrespective of the influence of modernization, urbanization, industrialization and over all development in tribal areas are extremely backward. They have low level of economy, shattered by hunger and malnutrition, razed by diseases and tear down at multiple stages in life. Here it has become the need of the time to study their problem by locating them and their problems with the help of census 2011. This paper is an exercise to study the strategies of inclusion of the nomadic tribes in census 2011.

### **Who are the Tribes?**

The term "tribe" has been derivative of English term TRIBUZ which has a Latin Root. Tribe means three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped. The meaning of the term thus varies from nation to nation. In Indian society also tribes are expressed variably. The various nomenclatures are given to the tribes. The name given by Risley (1915) says tribes as aboriginal man i.e. man of the soil, Hutton (1933) coined the term for them as primitive tribe, at the same time Shoobert (1933) designated the tribe as an aboriginal community. Ghurye (1959) has referred to the tribe as backward Hindus.

In the Indian society tribes are also termed by diverse names like, Adivasis (first settlers or autochthonous) Bhumi-putra ( sons of the soil); Janajati (folk people); Adim jati (original community); Vanyabasi ( inhabitants of forest); Vanyajati ( caste of forest ); upajati (sub-caste); Anusuchit janjati (scheduled tribes), Girijan ( hill dwellers) & so on. But none of the term accept Adivasi seems to be appropriate. The work of defining a tribes has the shades of caste also, as it is seen from the names. The tribes and caste are two

important pillars situated in the two poles of linear binary opposition. So here it is needed to study what is the linear binary opposition.

### **Difference between Caste and Tribe**

Hutton (1969), Ketkar (1909), Ghurye (1959), Andre Beteille (2002), Srinivas (1997) and others writers have agreed on the basic attribute of caste which are as caste such as is endogamy, caste membership by birth, and has occupation specialization. Caste is an ideology having religious basis involving restrictions on social course and commensality. The comparativeness of the group (caste) is on a local level. Bailey offered to explain the features of the tribe. He says tribes are in geographical isolation. Each tribe occupies a particular geographical area. One has little communication with the outside world. They are literally adopted or autoethones of aborigines. By and large each tribe has its own language. Tribals are animists by religion. Economy-wise, they are usually economically backward. Their occupations are based on forest and land. They love mostly primitive living.

The Lokur committee (1956) has suggested the norms of Scheduled tribe such as they have distinctive culture, primitive traits, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with community at large and backwardness. From the above features it is seen that there are differences between a tribe and a caste. The differences are seen in hierarchical system and the pattern of occupation. Caste has status hierarchy linked with caste based occupation where as tribes are opposite to them. Tribes hardly ever have rigid hierarchical system and usually are not linked with any specific occupation.

The difference between caste and tribe was first realized in 1891 by the census operation administration. It was in 1891, the tribes were defined in Imperial gazetter of India as “a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not endogamous though originally it had been so.” Tribals were considered to be as “backward class”, but later the term was used to denote them as the weaker sections of the Indian society. Until, 1919 they were termed as the “depressed class.” The Indian pro-administration committee in 1919 however accorded a different nomenclature for the census reports as under, in census 1931 tribes were referred as the primitive tribes. Census of 1941 referred them as “tribes” and Census of 1951 referred the tribals as “scheduled tribes” under the constitution vide articles 342(1).

Latter it was the definition given by Majumdar (1961) for tribes as “a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions; ruled by the tribal officers, heredity or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing the social distance from tribe or caste but without any stigma attached in the case of caste-structure following tribal traditions, beliefs, customs, illiberal naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all, conscious of homogeneity of ethnical and territorial integration’ (28<sup>th</sup> report of the commissioner for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, 1988).

### **Features of a tribal community**

Thus the feature of tribal says that they live in an isolated area as culturally distinct groups. The origin of tribal is from the oldest ethnological section of the population. They follow primitive methods such as hunting, gathering of minor forest produce and therefore they are economically as well as educationally backward. Members of tribal society profess a primitive religion and are not always within the Hindu fold in the usual sense. Tribals have their own common dialect. Their dialect has no written script. Tribals love music, dance and liquor. Members of tribal communities dress scantily.

### **Tribal Demography**

At the time of 1951 census, 212 tribes were scheduled in different parts of the country. However, the list of scheduled tribes has been modified or amended from time to time. It will be interesting to see through

the census, how they was enumerated. The total tribal population was taken into consideration in 1881. But it was only in 1941 that the tribal's census was enumerated based on 'tribal origin'. After independence in 1947, the tribal population was keenly taken into consideration due to their backwardness to give special provision to them to bring them at par with the rest of the society.

At the time of the first census of independent India in 1951, 'area restriction' provision was used by the census for recording tribal status. The 1961 census, the number of scheduled tribes doubled due to the modification of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list by the President of India in 1956. The area restriction had various problems and complaints, so it was removed by Area Restrictions (Amendment) Act of 1976. Henceforth the list of Scheduled Tribes was made applicable to all areas in a state (Maharatna, 2000). "The Scheduled Tribes (ST) were then on, for official and all practical purposes, taken to constitute the tribal population of the country. There are difficulties set by 'the varying definition of a tribe, by changes in the list of officially recognized tribes, by qualitative deficiencies in demographic data, administrative changes in India's regions and by the reclassification of tribes as castes'" (Wiecinski 1996). Below Table No.1 gives the information of tribal population from 1881 to 2001 through the British sources of census and the Indian sources of census.

**Tables No. 1 Tribal population in British India and Independent India since 1881 to 2001**

Year	Total Population	Tribal Population	
<b>British India</b>			
1881	250,155,050	6,426,511	2.57%
1891	279,575,324	9,112,018	3.26%
1901	283,867,584	8,184,758	2.88%
1911	303,004,354	9,593,695	3.17%
1921	305,726,528	9,072,024	3.00%
1931	337,675,361	7,629,959	2.45%
1941	388,997,955	8,791,354	2.26%
<b>Independent India</b>			
1951	361,088,090	19,111,498	5.29%
1961	439,234,771	30,130,184	6.86%
1971	548,159,652	38,015,162	6.94%
1981	665,287,849	51,628,638	7.76%
1991	838,583,988	67,758,380	8.08%
2001	1,028,610,328	84,326,240	8.20%

Source: Maharatna, A. (2000) Introduction: An Overview of India's Tribal Demography, Oxford University press, pp.17

Table no.1 reveals that the tribal population in British India from 1881 to 1941 was fluctuating between 2.26 % and 3.26 %. In 1881, the tribal population was 2.57% which it further increases to 3.26% in 1891, but in 1901 it was reduced to 2.88%. Then in 1911, it increased to 3.17%. From the Census 1921 till 1941, it shows slow down of tribal population from 3.00% to 2.45% and 2.26% respectively.

The Independent India census of 1951 showed rapid increase in population till 2001. In 1951 tribal population was 5.29%, latter in 1961 it was 6.86% and further in 1971 it was 6.94%. Tribal Population further increased to 7.76%, 8.08% and 8.20% in 1981, 1991 and 2001 census respectively. According to 2001 the tribal population in state and union territory is given in Table No. 2.

**Table No.2: Scheduled Tribe Population in States / UTs of the country according to census 2001**

Sr. No.	State and Union territory	%
1	Madhya Pradesh	14.51
2	Maharashtra	10.17
3	Orissa	9.66
4	Gujarat	8.87
5	Rajasthan	8.42
6	Jharkhand	8.40
7	Chhattisgarh	7.85
8	Andhra Pradesh	5.96
9	West Bengal	5.23
10	Karnataka	4.11
11	Assam	3.92
12	Meghalaya	2.36
13	Nagaland	2.10
14	Jammu and Kashmir	1.31
15	Tripura	1.18
16	Mizoram	1.00
17	Bihar	0.90
18	Manipur	0.88
19	Arunachal Pradesh	0.84
20	Tamil Nadu	0.77
21	Kerala	0.43
22	Uttaranchal	0.30
23	Himachal Pradesh	0.29
24	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.16
25	Sikkim	0.13
26	Uttar Pradesh	0.13

**Source: Annual Report 2008-09, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, P.25**

The state of Maharashtra is bordered by another five states; Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. These five states are having more scheduled tribes population then at national level. In table No.3 the tribal population in Maharashtra and Neighboring states is given. The total tribal population in Maharashtra was 10.17%, Andhra Pradesh 5.96%, Chhattisgarh 7.85%, Gujarat 8.87%, Karnataka 4.11% and Madhya Pradesh 14.51%. These states have the influence of migration and legislation. This influence is mainly seen for the nomadic tribes.

**Table No. 3: Scheduled Tribe Population in Maharashtra and Neighboring states of Maharashtra, 2001**

Sr. No.	State	Total Population	ST Population	% age of STs in the State to total State Population in 2001	% of STs in state to total ST population in India in 2001
1	<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>96,878,627</b>	<b>8,577,276</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>10.17</b>
2	Andhra Pradesh	76,210,007	5,024,144	6.6	5.96
3	Chhattisgarh	20,833,803	6,616,596	31.8	7.85
4	Gujarat	50,671,017	7,481,160	14.8	8.87
5	Karnataka	52,850,562	3,463,986	6.6	4.11
6	Madhya Pradesh	60,343,023	12,233,474	20.3	14.51

**Source:** Compiled by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Annual Report 2008-09, p.38-39.

Tribal population of Maharashtra is 8.9% and it contributes 10.17% for total ST population of India. The neighboring states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh is 6.6%, 31.8%, 14.8%, 6.6% and 20.3% respectively in 2001. The contribution of tribal population at country level is highest for Madhya Pradesh. Table no. 4 is particularly describing the tribal population (in percentage) of Maharashtra and their literacy (in percentage) of them.

**Table No.4: Profile of Tribal Population and their literacy in Maharashtra State for Last Four Decades; 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, and 2001**

Particulars	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total Population	395.54	504.12	627.84	789.37	968.79
Tribal Population	23.07	38.41	57.72	73.18	85.77
% of Tribal Population	5.83%	7.62%	9.19%	9.27%	8.85%
Total population Literacy %	29.82%	39.13%	47.02%	64.87%	76.90%
Scheduled Tribe %	7.21%	11.74%	22.29%	36.77%	55.20%

**Source:** [http://trti.mah.nic.in/try\\_frame.php?filename=static\\_pages/frm\\_Statistics.htm](http://trti.mah.nic.in/try_frame.php?filename=static_pages/frm_Statistics.htm)

Table no. 4 describes that the tribal population had increased from 1961 to 1991 but in 2001 it has decreased to 8.85%, which was less than 1981 census. On the other hand the tribal literacy has increased for this period and more drastically increased from 1991 onwards.

**Classifications of Scheduled Tribe are as following.**

**1) Primitive Tribes Groups:** Primitive Tribes Groups people are living in forest and hills from primitive decades. Primitive Tribes Groups are tribal communities among the STs who live in isolation in inaccessible habitats. They are characterized by a low rate of growth of population, pre-agricultural level of technology and extremely low levels of literacy. So far 75 PTGs in Maharashtra have been identified. ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

**2) Nomadic Tribes:** Nomads are people who travel around from place to place without having settled place where they live. Nomadic tribes wander, generally following a food source. A nomadic tribe might live in place A for a week, then place B for a couple of months, then place C, D, and E, all in one week. Over the years, they could even walk from one continent to the other, feeling no obligation to go back where they came from. (<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080902020749AAHTEo4>).

**3) Denotified tribes (DNT):** Denotified tribes or Khanabadosh are those herdless and homeless tribe roaming about on foot or on back of animals or in vehicles (Krishna, 2008). After Independence, under Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India clarifies that certain tribes were classified as Scheduled Tribes and have been provided with constitutional safeguards under Article 342 (2) on a national basis. The classification was made on the basis of the following criteria, which are fulfilled by the nomadic tribes (NT's) and the denotified tribes (DNT's) being the most depressed sections of society.

#### **i) Primitive Traits**

A majority of the Nomadic tribes and Denotified tribes exhibit the primitive traits even today. They still live in tribal groups moving from place to place in caravans in search of livelihood. The various practices like worship of nature in different forms, animal sacrifices during religious ceremonies, adorning head with horn (Banjara woman), not wearing a blouse (Wadar woman) are only a few of them to demonstrate this fact. Their social life is still governed by *Jat Panchayats*, a primitive form of social organization. Every year they assemble at Madhi a village in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state, in annual fair where the sessions are held by the

*Jat Panchayats* (Five to seven people committee of caste is formed to solved the individual and communities problem) of each tribe sort out various issues pertaining to individual and social problems.

## ii) Distinct Cultural Identity

The Nomadic tribes and Denotified tribes have a rich heritage of culture that is distinctly different from other social groups and can be easily identified by their dress, dialect, folklore, customs and practices. Their life style and the profession display these characteristics in every social encounter.

## iii) Geographical Isolation

From generation after generation, these tribes had wandering traditions and had hardly been integrated in the society. In fact, the society has always looked at them with mistrust and suspicion due to the stigma of criminality attached with them. In that sense they have been living a life of isolation from the rest of the society. Some of these tribes still prefer to stay near jungle, away from the villages. Their temporary settlements are known as *pal* or *pada* (Temporary hut).

## iv) Social Backwardness

The Nomadic tribes and Denotified tribal have no means of production and livelihood as a result of which they have to move from village to village in the form of a caravan. Their children are deprived of education. They cannot take education through regular school systems in a settled society due to thier unstable life style. They are left away from the mainstream of life and their life is fossilized in poverty, superstition and ignorance. They have remained backward economically and socially. Apart from the criteria mentioned above there are two other criteria which make these tribes eligible for having constitutional safeguards which are enjoyed by the Scheduled Tribes.

### a) Nomadic Way of Life

As already mentioned these tribes have wandering traditions. In absence of any means of survival and lack of education to fit into the settled society they are forced to continue with this tradition for bare survival in the most degrading and sub human conditions. Thousands of families belonging to these tribes wander from place to place and stay in temporary structures rarely fit for humans beings to stay. Unless they settle at one place or another, unless they are provided with opportunities of education and employment they will never be in a position to integrate themselves in the society and avail the benefits of modern civil life.

### a) Stigma and Criminality

Though Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 the stigma of criminality is still attached with them. Due to this stigma they were the victims of persecution and torture at the hands of the British and the state machinery. Anywhere an act of theft or robbery takes place persons belonging to these tribes in the surrounding area were arrested and subjected to various forms of torture. In the eyes of the society they are still criminals, and a wide gulf exists between them and the rest of the society ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

## Nomadic Tribes:

Nomads are people who travel around from place to place without having returning to settled place where they live. Many are hunters and gatherer like Pardhi. Often they are shepherd, goatherd, or cattle herders. Sometime they do stay in one place all winter, and only travel in the summer, or the other way around. Apart from the compulsions of nature and search for food, quest for knowledge and exploration of the unknown regions have led people to move from one place to another and interact with different groups of people.

Apparently nomads are marginal people but it appears they have become marginal. The nomadic people, like all other weaker sections of the populations, are under tremendous pressure.

Nomads not only add variety and charm but also integrate different aspects of life at different levels; they are one of the factors which allow the use of the quoted cliché – unity in diversity. Nomads are unique from societal point of view and are of great significance. They are unique because they move neither out of climatic compulsions nor for razing. They move in the countryside, towns and even cities of India. The data so far collected suggest that this category of nomads is widely found in the country.

The data also suggest that they perform a variety of functions. They provide a variety of goods and specialist services to the settled people. They entertain people in a variety of ways. They forecast the future of the people. They facilitate people to perform certain rituals, and meritorious acts. They provide herbal and such medicines which may not be ordinarily available. They keep genealogies of some castes, act as gurus for some castes and perform very special services for some particular castes. Some groups even specialise in providing sexual pleasures to people. All this and many more functions are performed by them, including those who repudiate the established norms of the wider social system. However, all this does not explain why they should be habitually moving. Nomadism is the practice, fact or state of involving the habitual traditional movement of people in response to their needs of subsistence.

There are 313 Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra. Due to the wandering traditions over hundreds of years without any ostensible means of livelihood under the influence of the caste system, they are forced to live under sub-human conditions. The large section of these tribes is known as "Vimukta jaatis" or the Ex-Criminal Tribes because they were branded as criminals by birth under the "Criminal Tribes Act 1871", enacted by the British Government. In spite of the repeal of the act in 1952, they are still treated as criminals by birth and subjected to harassment and persecution at the hands of the police and the state machinery. However, they have been deprived of the status of Scheduled Tribes provided by the constitution due to certain historical circumstances and the acts of omission and commission on part of the government and the society ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

All India Nomadic Tribes Enquiry Committee classified nomadic tribes in three parts like Pastoral Nomads, related to the 'need of cattle' belonging to the community who therefore leads a nomadic life in search of new pasture. Non-Pastoral Nomads, was summarised that symbiotic non-pastoral nomads who are not an aberration of the Indian Society. If one conceives of the age when transport system was not so developed and the mass media were not there, nomads must have gone one place to another and must have been also considered as very brave people who could take such hazardous tasks. It has been shown that kings and laity anxiously awaited their arrival (G.S.Gai, Chief Epigraphist in Malhotra, K.C. et al (1978). The Khanabadosh are those herdless and homeless tribes roaming about on foot or on back of animals or in vehicles. Among them are the food-gathers, hunters, fishermen, carriers, fortune-tellers, quack-doctors, traders, palmists and bamboo workers etc. The semi-nomadic are those that have home and lands but they wander periodically following their vocations ((Krishna, 2008, Survey of the selected Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic tribes of Maharashtra state 1981, page 6-9).

### **Constitutional Act for Nomadic Tribes**

In 1871, the large section of these tribes is known as "*Vimukta jaatis*" or the Ex-Criminal Tribes because they were branded as criminals by birth under the "Criminal Tribes Act 1871", enacted by the British Government. In the year 1950, the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was released. In 1952, the Indian Government withdrew the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 throughout India and enacted Habitual Offender's Act 1952 which in April 2007 was repealed but it has not vanished stigma of criminal ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

## **Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra**

There are many types of groups and sub-groups in Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) of Maharashtra state. Previously the Denotified Tribes were called criminal tribes and separate settlements were established for these groups. In India there are various heterogeneous ethnic groups of people from the very past. To deal with these people of criminal type, Government had made some acts and rules from time to time. In 1871 the British Government passed an enactment under which Nomadic Tribal committing criminal activities were categorised as "Criminal tribes" and members of these groups were treated badly. The Government kept vigilant watch over their movement and people tried to avoid them for fear of their violent and original activities.

After the act of 1871, Government has amended the act again in the year 1879 and penalty was increased. A Provision was made pertaining to permitting tribes between the age of four to eighteen years to be taken were taken from the parents and placed them in reformatory settlement. Firstly, in 1890 the first Criminal Tribes Settlement Act was passed so that the suspected criminals could be registered and supervised by the police in the settlement. They were taught to work and instructions were given to them to lead an honest life. Their children were sent to schools. It hoped to have complete reformation of the criminal tribes. The goal was not achieved and so the act was again amended in the year 1911, and the criminal tribes were classified into the following three categories like tribes who were originally criminal but had settled down to honest occupation, although some sections of them or individuals continue to be in crime, tribal's who are settled but generally do ostensible occupation and periodically committed dacoities and robberies at distant and nomadic tribes who wandered continuously and committed robberies whenever opportunities offered.

Sutherland et al (1992) says that the act provided for registering of all the members of any group of tribes including the non-criminals members as a potential criminal. This means social and legal stigma both on the criminals and the non-criminals within a group. Thus for fear and non-acceptance by the society and fear of the Government even non-criminals were probably forced to take to crime as profession and with this tradition they became criminals by force.

After 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, Indian leaders, social thinkers and social workers took a note of this problem. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also told in his one of the speeches that "This Act (Criminal tribe) is advance of human liberty, all persons are equal." The Central Government appointed a committee in 1949 to study the usefulness of this law. After careful study this committee has given its report that this law was against the spirit of human being. Then in the year 1952 the Habitual Offender Act was enacted. With the result of this about 23 lakh persons which were caught under the Criminal Act were set free legally.

After 1952 in India, a noble policy was incorporated in the present Indian Constitution. Article (13) says that "No person under laws can be discriminated against on the basis of caste, creed, religion or colour." Article (14) says "The State shall not deny to any person equally before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India". By this article equal opportunity is given to all the people. It is true that equal opportunity is meaningless under unequal circumstances so special facilities were given to these depressed and economically as well as socially backward classes.

Article (15) says " The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them". Subsequently, the ex-criminal tribes came to be known as Denotified tribes or Vimukta Jatis. In some States some ex-criminal tribes were included under the category of Scheduled Tribes and they could be eligible for special treatment.

## **Population of Nomadic tribes in Maharashtra**

Table No. 5 reveals that the population (in lakhs) of the nomadic tribes of Maharashtra. It reveals that the Nomadic tribes (NT) population has been enumeration from 1931 (British India) to 2001. Nomadic tribe population in 1931 was 22 lakhs and in 1941, it was decreased to 10 lakhs. The data for the years 1951, 1971

and 1981 is not available for NT population in the above table. The census of 1991 and 2001 reveals that Nomadic tribes population has increased from 68 lakhs to 85 lakhs.

**Table No. 5: Population of Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra**

Year	Population in Lacks
1931	22
1941	10
1951	N.A
1961	30
1971	N.A
1981	N.A
1991	68
2001	85

Source: Maharashtra handbook 2004, Government of Maharashtra

Note: N.A. =Not Available

### Major Nomads in the states neighboring to Maharashtra

**Table No. 6: Major Nomads in the states neighboring in Maharashtra**

Sr. No.	Maharashtra	Karnataka	Andhra Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Gujarat	Chhattisgarh
Total NT Population Approximate		-	-	10 million(a)	50 lakhs <sup>(b)</sup>	-
Major NT	Pardhi Banjara Vaddar kolhatis Kaikadi Phase Pardhi Berad kanjarbhat	Banjara, Chenswar Choncharu, Dhangar, Kuruba,	Balasanthu, Dommara, Jogi, Madaari, Gangireddula, Dakkala, Dasari, Mashtin, Are Marati, Sikligar, Banda, Poleramma <sup>(a)</sup> , Banjara, Dhangar, Baghel, Gadariya, Ghosi, Neekkar, Pal, Baghela, Ahir, Yadava, Gaval, Gvali, Bharud	Banjara, Malwa, Kanjar, Marwar, Bhilalas, Barelal, Sahariya	Malwa, Bhils, Gowdia, Garacia, Rabaris, Jats	Banjara, Bhil, Birhor, Damar, Gond, Kharia, Majhi, Munda, Oraon, Parathi

Note:

(a) A status report (2007) The Millennium Development Goals and the Nomadic, Pastoral and De-notified Tribes of Andhra Pradesh (India), p.20

(b) Mittal Patel of VSSM, Ahmedabad, <http://nomadictribes.blogspot.com/2008/09/nomadic-denotified-tribes-send-24.html>

Above table No. 6 reveals that in Maharashtra and its five neighboring states have the major common nomads like Bhil, Banjara, Malva, Dhanagar, Gond, Ahir.....etc. The Nomadic population of Madhya Pradesh alone is approximately 10 million. All the above nomads do inter-state migration.

## List of Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra

Tribes wise classifications in the table no. 7 reveals 34 names of nomadic tribes in Maharashtra.

**Table no. 7 List of Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra**

Sr. No.	Tribes of Maharashtra	Sr. No.	Tribes of Maharashtra
1	Gosavi	18	Pangul
2	Beldar	19	Raval
3	Bharadi	20	Shikalgar
4	Bhute	21	Thakur
5	Chitrakathi	22	Vaidu
6	Garudi	23	Vasudev
7	Ghisadi	24	Bhoi
8	Golla	25	Baharupi
9	Gondhali	26	Thehari
10	Gopal	27	Otari
11	Helave	28	Dhangar
12	Joshi	29	Wanjari
13	Kashi Kapadi	30	Gihara / Gahara
14	Kolhati	31	Mariaaiwale, adaklaxmiwale, margammawale
15	Mairal	32	Gusai/Gosai
16	Masanjogi	33	Muslim Madari, Garudi, Sapwale Jadugar
17	Nandiwale	34	Bharariy Irani etc.

**Source:** - Social Welfare Department Government of Maharashtra, 2004

### Popular Personality in Nomadic Community

Given the chance, the Nomadic tribe people has made great difference to themselves and to the nation also. Popular Nomadic people in politics are

**Vasantrao Naik** was an Indian politician who served as Chief Minister of Maharashtra from 1963 until 1975. He was born in Gavli, Pusad in 1913. He died in 1979. His experience in grass-roots politics made him a responsible legislator. He was a staunch supporter of Mr. Yashwantrao Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra. After the death of Mr. M. Kannamwar, he was elected Chief Minister of Maharashtra, a post which he handled successfully for more than 11 years. He was the father of the Green Revolution in Maharashtra. During his regime, Maharashtra became a more developed state. His nephew Sudhakarrao Naik later became Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

**Sudhakarrao Naik** (1934-2001) was an Indian politician who served as Chief Minister of Maharashtra from 1991 until 1993. Born at the remote Gavli village in the Vidarbha region, he was nephew of Mr Vasantrao Naik who was Chief Minister of Maharashtra for 11 years. He started his political career from his rural base as Sarpanch or village head. He started his larger political career from Pusad. His role as Education Minister of Maharashtra is still held with high importance. Mr. Sharad Pawar gave him the post of Chief Minister when he became a Minister at the Center. He served as Governor of Himachal Pradesh from 1994 to 1995. He is also remembered for his work in water conservation (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjara>).

### Historical Perspective of the Nomadic Tribe Problem

The territory of the early Nizam state was shared by Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Afterwards according to the linguistic pattern, the states were formed. The tribes in the state of Nizam have one status, now in three different states their status is changed. The tribes in the territory of Andhra Pradesh and

Karnataka enjoy the constitutional status and privileges, while the same tribes in the territory of Marathwada region of Maharashtra are deprived of it for no fault of theirs. Similarly, it is ironical that tribes like the Kaikadi and Pardhi in Vidarbha, which was previously a part of Madhya Pradesh, enjoy the constitutional status and in the rest of Maharashtra they are deprived of it.

Since the Nomadic and the Denotified tribes which form the lowest rungs of the society fulfill all the criteria applicable to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) they enjoy the constitutional status in most other states. Unfortunately, their counterparts in Maharashtra, though they share the same dialect, life style, cultural practices, social customs and blood relations are deprived of the status of the Schedule Tribes. Instead of doing away with the injustice, the government went on including more and more tribes and even castes in the Schedule of the NT's and DNT's pushing the original tribe against the wall ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

### **A Brief History of Movement**

The Nomadic and Denotified tribes have been fighting for justice since 1972. Unfortunately, no attention has been paid by the Government to this just and rightful demand. Efforts were made by them on this issue. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 1985, a statewide *Rasta Roko* (Stop Way or street) agitation was organised. After one year on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1986, *Birhad Morcha* (All family people involved in grouped strike for demands) about 10,000 families belonging to these tribes took out a morcha in Nasik jail demanding arrest and imprisonment if the Government fails to provide Constitutional safeguards. In June 1987, *Pardhi Parishad* making similar demand. In Oct 1987, *Birhad Morcha* was organized at Chalisgaon for same. On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1988, Manifesto of demands was submitted to the Governor of Maharashtra and filed a writ petition in Bombay High Court for their demands. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1989, a memorandum was submitted to the late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister through Sharad Pawar, the Chief minister of Maharashtra. On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 1990, the attention of the State government was again drawn to the age old demand of these tribes by going on a fast on the eve of a winter session of Maharashtra assembly in Nagpur ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

### **Decisive Moment**

The then, Chief Minister was well aware of the problems and the demands of these tribes and also about the history of the movements. These tribes put the Chief Minister to test and launch a decisive agitation against the discrimination and injustice meted out against the tribes. The Government of Maharashtra, has already declared its decision of implementation of recommendations of Mandal commission. Here the Nomadic and Denotified tribes have been clubbed with other advanced sections of the society in the Mandal Commission Report but these tribes said that, they will never be in a position to avail any benefit out of it. On the contrary, it has done a lot of injustice to the tribes in the original Schedule of NT's and DNT's.

In these circumstances the NT's and DNT's are left with no alternative but to prepare themselves for protracted struggle against the injustice to secure their demand of classification equivalent to Schedule Tribes. The NT's and DNT's have no intention of cutting into the share of the present Schedule Tribes. On the other hand, they demand that they should be included in a separate schedule having a constitutional status equal to the ST's. The ST's are not their foes but their allies in the struggle. It is possible to classify these tribes as Schedule tribes by a notification issued by the President of India. It may be appropriate to quote here that a similar act of omission in respect of certain tribes in Nagaland was corrected by the former Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in a similar fashion.

The Nomadic and Denotified Tribes are National tribes but they have no place of their own. Hitherto, their life is a long tale of suffering and persecution due to the absence of a means of livelihood and the stigma of criminality attached to them by the sedentary society. While it may take years and years to remove this stigma, the injustice meted out to them due to the act of omission and neglect could well be corrected without any

further delay. It will be impossible for these tribes to enjoy human rights or the civil rights available to the citizens of India unless there is a positive intervention of the government in the form of Constitutional safeguards ([http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india\\_tribes.html](http://sickle.bwh.harvard.edu/india_tribes.html)).

The ECONET (2006-07) shows the survey of total 109 total families out of which 33 families are engaged in traditional profession, 16 families are engaged semi skilled labour; 14 families are engaged in production and 10 families are engaged in sale of goods, the nature of goods here has changed but the nature of livelihood is just like the traditional livelihood where the nomads were engaged in sale of salt, honey and other such commodities from place to place. Almost 20 families from Non-pastoral Nomadic communities are engaged in multiple other livelihood alternatives which are mostly low capital more labour intensive. This also indicates that people from nomadic communities also are consciously making efforts to explore such livelihood alternative which will help them to establish primary resident-ship and also bring change in their socio-economical situation.

Out of 109 total families from different livelihood alternatives, 20 families from different nomadic communities were using multiple (more than one) livelihood alternatives for survival like producer and service provider, production of traditional goods and sale of goods. They are Banjara, Giri gosavi, Kaikadi, Lohar, Mangarudi, Zinga Bhoi communities because their traditional profession is vanishing and due to lack of skills for other profession they use multiple livelihood alternatives (Econet, 2006-07, 160-161).

### **Status of Nomadic Tribes in Social Sector**

Based on the survey of Econet, some observations are made which reveals the status of NT's in the livelihood sectors, education and health. Following are some of the observations (Kharat 2003).

**a) Livelihood:** In the pre-colonial times, nomadic communities sustained themselves through a number of livelihood options including cattle rearing, itinerant trade and crafts. Carrying items for barter like spices, salt, honey, herbs, trinkets crafted out of silver, earthenware, mats, etc on the backs of their cattle, they traded with whoever they came across on their travels.

The nomads had a good relationship with secondary villagers. Dr. Meena Radhakrishna, an anthropologist who has researched nomadic tribes, writes in *The Hindu* (July 16, 2000) that "the nomadic communities were not just useful to the villagers on day-to-day, they were also acknowledged for averting frequent grain shortages and famine-like conditions in villages where the crop had failed. In addition, among them were musicians, acrobats, dancers, tightrope walkers, jugglers and fortune tellers. On the whole, they were considered a welcome and colorful change in routine life whenever they visited or camped near a village.

Colonial rule had a disastrous effect on India's nomadic communities. Their trading activities were badly affected by the introduction of the railways and the expansion of both the road and rail network by the British, in the 1850s. In the 1860s, the British began taking control of the forests and common pastures, armed with the Indian Forest Act of 1865. With this, nomadic communities lost access to grazing lands as well as minor forest produce needed for their sustenance and their craft.

After Independence, the government realised that the Criminal Tribes Act was a shameful colonial legacy, so, repealed the Act in 1952. Tribes that were 'notified' became 'denotified'. However, the government did not simultaneously take any steps towards finding a livelihood for members of de-notified and nomadic tribes. They were left to their own devices (Econet, 2006-07, 157-160).

Today livelihood is one of the major concerns with nomadic communities and that is why the first state of affairs is livelihoods without inclusion of which this base line would have been incomplete. Present conditions of the then nomadic tribes shows that of quite a few times the sedentary villagers do not give them permission to stay. They often stay on outskirts of the village and are often not included in the village record, as

most of them even today continue to be nomadic along with their families. This makes them unrecognized as residents and are ignore from any demographic survey. During their stay in cities often have to live in very unhygienic places, open places of the city in the center which used to be in the periphery.

Their traditional occupations includes making of a tin pot, iron Axe (Kurhad), knife (*Vila*), making a Bambu Topali (instrument like bamboo basket), Sup (instrument of cleaning grains), sale of medicine oil, cutlery and goods, tailoring, stove repairing, animal husbandry, agriculture etc. In the present scenario there is little demand for their traditional profession. With little alternatives they have to rely on wage labour, beggary, Alms begging which does not provide them with adequate support for their basic needs. This continues to deprive them of economic development, pushing them into marginalization. Nomadic communities who have low income level so they are in below poverty line. But it so happens that these communities do not have documents many a times and are not eligible for government schemes. Anywhere an act of theft or robbery takes place persons belonging to these tribes in the surrounding area are arrested and subjected to various forms of torture. In the eyes of the society they are still criminals, and a wide gulf exists between them and the rest of the society. Many times this communities move to other places to help of the police and have to face police atrocities.

Nomadic tribes are searching permanently residing house for social and economic level changes. They are facing more difficulties even today like stigma of criminology, no identity, restriction of government, no finance facility etc. This has been identified as one of the main reason of them being deprived of basic citizenship rights which would have helped them access to the government schemes and other support systems. The result of all this culminates into keeping them away from social and economic development which leads to lesser or negligible assets creation for long term and sustainable livelihood support.

**b) Health:** In that time many nomadic communities were using nomadism as way of life and therefore they move from one place to another place for survival. They often stay in very unhealthy surroundings, in out skirts of villages, roadsides open places and in the city. In most such places there is lack of basic amenities like water, electricity, sanitation facilities in their settlement. Their settlements are far away from main villages and thus often unnoticed by the administration in the village.

The doctors, nurses and workers behavior badly with the Nomadic communities in the primary health center and do not visit to their Pal or Pada. As there are no resident doctor in many primary health centre and most times rest of the staff is also not available in primary health centre in working hours the functioning of these centers then becomes only a presence of mere physical structure.

There are very less number of female doctors in the Primary Health Center therefore women from nomadic communities do not visit to Primary Health Center for the treatment because of social taboo or they go to private hospitals for female doctors for which they have to take debt from money lender due to their poor economic situation. Overcoming the reservations of the social taboo if they make an effort to access the health services of PHCs (Primary Health Centre) most of the PHC staff treat them with a lot of bias which is a severe form of discrimination. Nomadic communities' women deliveries happen at home in very unhygienic condition which is very risky for the women. Due to this they are not registered for birth and death of their children.

They do not have any document from in the village like that of ration card, registration of name, identity card etc., so they do not get it any medical facility. Basically Anganwadis (primary school) are the core centers of the Integrated Child Development Skill (ICDS) program which provides health check-up, immunization of the pregnant women from tetanus, referral services, supplementary nutrition, education on nutrition and health. The different health problems like Chicken Gunnia, Diarrhea, and Malnutrition are high in women of Nomadic communities. Also they are often affected by many diseases because of blind beliefs, living in very unhealthy surrounding, no facility of water, sanitation etc.

**c) Education:** It is basically a social progress which is concerned with how the student develops as an individual and in group relations. Education is core of human life. After independence, education is part of the directive principles and as per 83<sup>rd</sup> amendment (in 1997) of the constitution it was included as a fundamental right (Cultural and Education Rights- Article 29, 30 and 31. Part III of the Indian Constitution). Although millions of children in rural areas, urban slums of whom a majority are nomadic communities who do not have Primary residence, whose right to basic education still remains a distant dream (National Education Policy 1886, PP. no. 10- 11).

#### **Situation of Education among nomadic communities:**

Nomadic communities utilize nomadism for their survival and livelihood and hence move from one place to another with often no permanent place to stay. The children of nomadic communities do not get their basic "Rights of Education". This communities are not only nomadic in nature but tows the stigma of a colonial Act 1871 though it has been denotified in 1952, many of the sub-communities or castes of nomads are involved in alms begging as part of their traditional profession. This also builds into the on going social discrimination along with the nomadic life style resulting in keeping them away from Registration or Primary Resident-ship status of any village.

Basically the nomadic life of them do not allow them to get governmental education benefit. because of which education dropout rate is high. The attitude of Nomadic communities of looking at women's education is that of it being 'not important, not required or not valuable'. This is the classic reflection of their patriarchal way of thinking. The inequalities among the sexes are due to the belief in 'Purity' of women and thus are often not sent to ashram schools. Most of the girl's dropout from the school is because of early marriage, family responsibility, domestic work and taking care of their siblings. Nomadic communities have negative view towards girl's education. In the Ashram school students from nomadic communities face discriminatory practices like limited or no access to sports equipment, work in kitchen and teachers do not guide the students etc.

The quality of food is not good in many ashram schools; no vocational training facilities to get opportunity to learn different skills facility. In today's context book education will not help the student to create their livelihood niche because vocational training facility is not available. Due to nomadism, Social taboo and poor economic position, no required document are unabling them to access education. Only education cannot support people of nomadic communities to earn a living and attain a better quality life, they will have to develop new skills to match with the changing scenarios within and the larger outside environment.

#### **Importance of the Census 2011**

First and the most important thing which we recommend based on this study was that there is dire need for census survey of the nomadic communities. Faulty enumeration and consequences creates serious problem in the study of tribal demography which lies in proper identification and designation of the communities. It appears that necessary care has not been exercised either in the census enumeration or in the preparation of lists of scheduled tribes. One error leads to another error and the cumulative distortions confuse and confound any worker in this field. This is the area where micro studies can help clearing the confusion.

There is need to include nomads in the census 2011 to show their population in the country's record. The census report of Maharashtra will help to understand the population of NT in the state for making government five years plans at state and central government. It will enable the service provider institution like that of Education, Health, Finance and other to locate the nomadic communities. Nomadic communities do not have Ration Card, Resident Proof certificate, Birth and Death certificate, Income certificate, tribe certificate and Vote identity etc, this certificate will be provided to them by their communities' people. Each and every economic planning process happening at centre and state government level should necessarily include the needs of Nomadic communities (Mane, 1997).

## Need to include nomadic tribes in the census

Nomadic communities have prominent position in the Hindu social system because these communities provided services for the Hindu festivals in a traditional way by wondering from village to village. They have only traditional skills like that of genealogy but absence of modern skills. Today's era is of cinema hall, televisions, science and technology so the importance for their traditional skill is in less demand. There is no sizeable need of their traditional skill in one place so they have to migrate to other place. They neither have education, training, land or adequate income. It is recommendable to make some new schemes for the nomadic communities so that their socio-economic status is improved. For this purpose the non governmental organization (NGO) should help to locate the nomadic tribe's primary residence so that they can be enlisted in the census.

## Government necessary help for the development of Nomadic Tribes

There is need of creating permanent list of the nomadic tribes in Maharashtra by constitutional means. There is need of academic education along with the vocational training. It will be good to encourage the traditional profession which compliments the socially needful modern employment. Health institutions should change their approach towards nomadic communities than only they will benefit from the health services.

## Conclusion

Nomadic tribes are demanding for equivalent reservation as that of Scheduled tribes for themselves. According to sections 19, 20, and 21 of the constitution, the citizens are guaranteed with the right to settle in any part of the country. Nomadic communities of Maharashtra have same rights but there are no bases or basic document to implement it. So they are migrating to nearly other states. Unless government of India provide constitutional rights and safeguards to NT alike any other citizen of India through citizen rights and human rights, the NT will not be in position to use this rights. There is need of help from government, educational and financial institution and local communities. They are searching new optional livelihood but they do not get so they have to face more difficulties. Unless nomadic communities do not get primary resident-ship certificate, likewise education and job opportunity, NT communities will not be included in the social mainstream and cannot take benefit of modern society.

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