

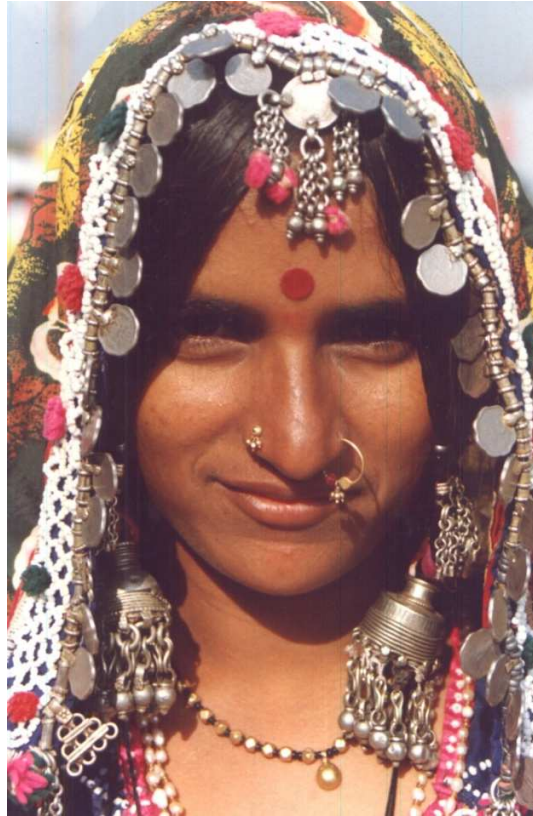
Project Report

Research Study

**‘Socio-Economic Status of Women of Denotified & Nomadic  
Communities in Delhi’**

Submitted to

**National Commission for Women**



By

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# Study Report

## ‘Socio-Economic Status of Women of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in Delhi’

### **Preface**

Denotified & Nomadic 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. Their literacy rate is very low. Most of them don't have access to health care facilities. They suffer from a number of atrocities not only by people of other communities but within their own families.

‘National Commission for Women’, Govt. of India sanctioned a project to Sarthak for conducting a Research Study on ‘Socio-Economic Status of Women of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in Delhi’. The objective of this study was to develop a deep insight into the socio-economic problems of women of these communities, appraise the effectiveness of various government schemes and interventions meant to improve their status of living and help government evolve new strategies to bring about a positive and sustainable change in their lives.

One of the major problems faced by policy makers has been the lack of relevant data and information about various socio-economic issues concerning these communities. Since this section of society has been on the margins for centuries, not many research studies have been conducted on their problems, which makes the task of policy makers difficult for developing adequate welfare policies and schemes for them. Therefore we hope this present study will be able to bridge this gap and will provide an insight in the problems faced by women of these social groups.

We thank ‘National Commission for Women’ for providing financial support for conducting this study, which we hope will highlight the problems faced by these women, and will help in making the suitable recommendations for their welfare and social uplift.

Ramesh Pranesh  
Project Director

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## **Acknowledgments**

This study is a humble effort to understand the problems of women of denotified and nomadic communities in Delhi, which involved frequent visits to various settlements of these communities, holding meetings with women, and conducting focused consultations with community leaders and other stakeholders.

A number of civil society groups working for these communities were also consulted about their views and experiences. The suggestions given by them were very helpful in developing the adequate strategy and approach for the study, and in the collection of data from various settlements. I also owe my thanks to social workers, activists and scholars working on this issue for providing their valuable guidance, suggestions and support.

The survey team received full support of people at grass root level. We thank all from the communities despite many of them being daily wage earners who spared their valuable time for responding to our questions and providing valuable information in building a comprehensive perspective of the life situation of the denotified and nomadic communities in Delhi.

We express our thanks to Dr. Anuja Aggarwal from 'Delhi School of Economics' University of Delhi for providing her valuable inputs in making this study more focused. I also thank and congratulate our team of research investigators for working extremely hard to collect relevant data from the field.

I am grateful to 'National Commission for Women' for providing financial support for conducting this study and offering an opportunity to highlight the problems of the women of these most deprived and exploited sections of Indian society. We hope this study will help understand the problems of these communities better, and evolve new development strategies for their development.

Ramesh Pranesh

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#### **Executive Summary**

The present study has tried to develop a deep insight into various problems faced by women of Denotified & Nomadic communities in Delhi. The study addressed various socio-economic issues concerning them with a human rights perspective.

The study was aimed at having an objective assessment of the effectiveness of various welfare programmes and interventions undertaken by the government to help these women enjoy a full and decent life with dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration. It looked into the qualitative as well as quantitative changes taking place as a result of their interaction with other communities in an effort to improve their standard of living, and to remove the barriers for their full and effective participation in social and economic development. The study also examined the needs of special care focusing on the most vulnerable women belonging to these communities.

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

- To develop deep insight into the socio-economic factors responsible for the problem of women of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in Delhi
- To assesses their socio-economic status and evolving new scopes and challenges
- To appraise the effectiveness of various government schemes and interventions targeting the prevention of various atrocities and their rehabilitation.
- To evaluate coordination among various government agencies dealing with their problems.
- To assess the role of voluntary organizations working at grass root level and engaged in creating awareness, providing counseling and rehabilitative services.
- To give suggestions and recommendations to the govt. about new methods and approaches to tackle their problems.

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The present study adopted an exploratory-cum-descriptive design to gather the relevant information and data. The exploratory design was chosen in order to collect basic statistical data to have an in-depth knowledge of the socio-economic status of women of these communities as well as the impact of various laws on their livelihood and their relationship with other communities. The descriptive design was helpful in getting to know the inner most feelings, views and attitudes of the respondents. The study also tried to critically evaluate the impact of various welfare programme and schemes meant for their development, and identify other influencing factors, and make necessary recommendations for the effective alternative strategies.

The method of collecting information was participatory. The respondents of the survey were made to feel at ease while responding to various questions. The respondents were fully assured that their identity will be kept confidential. This made them very comfortable in sharing their problems, views and opinions freely with confidence. The study report thus reflects the perception of community on various issues.

The study focused on women of denotified and nomadic communities settled or working in Delhi. It covered settlements of these communities in all districts of the state. Many of the Denotified & Nomadic communities keep shifting their settlements either due to displacement by local authorities or migration to other places in search for better livelihood opportunities. Therefore, the study covered their permanent, semi-permanent and temporary habitats. There is no record available of social mapping conducted of these communities in Delhi either by government or any other voluntary organization. Thus the study focused on identified settlements of these communities spread across the state. The unit for data collection was household. All the respondents were women between the age group of 18 to 65.

The sample size of the study was 1600 respondents. The study covered 8 Denotified and Nomadic communities i.e. Qalandar, Gadia Lohar, Sapera, Nat, Bhat, Sanshi, Rai Sikh and Kanjar. 200 respondents from each community were interviewed. The criteria



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for the selection of the communities for this study was based on the coverage of maximum socio-economic variation and their geographical spread across the state. It included social variables such as their habitation, socio-economic status, nature and pattern of livelihood etc.

After analyzing the information and data collected from respondents and on the basis of critical study of the situation the following conclusions were drawn from the study.

Housing is one of the major problems of these communities. Since most of them have been nomadic and have been wandering in the past to earn their living, most of them never had a permanent home or settlement. But faced with new changing realities, these communities now want to settle down at one place. Discussions held with most of the respondents also busted the myth that no matter how the government tries to settle them down by giving them land or houses, these communities still prefer nomadic lifestyle.

The overall conditions prevailing in the slums and J J Clusters inhabited by these communities are horrible. Most of the families put up their Jhuggis in a slum or at a vacant patch of land alongside the road as they can't afford any other accommodation. The condition of living even in resettlement colonies is not better. It is also a wonder as to how a family of six and seven members live in an 8feet x8 feet Jhuggi. There is no proper drainage system as a result of which human and animal excreta are found scattered all around and emits foul smell which is a major health hazard for the residents. There is hardly any park or open space for children to play.

Most of the families don't have enough space in their houses to have a separate toilet. So most of the people either use public toilets or go into open field. Even the women have to go to defecate in the open. If given a choice, people are ready to build and use toilets at home. Open defecation is a major cause of poor community sanitation, and a threat to public health. Women are more vulnerable to various infections.

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Most of the households surveyed don't have access to safe drinking water. Either there is no tapped water or it is far away from the settlement. It is often the duty of the women and adolescent girls to go and collect water which is time taking and very tiring. When water is in short supply, water is used only for drinking and kitchen. Under these circumstances, people are not able to take regular baths for days and weeks which lowers the level of their personal hygiene.

Displacement of their settlement by local authorities is another major problem faced by these communities. They are considered to be illegal or unauthorized encroachers or occupants by government agencies and other communities. The families remain under the constant fear of being displaced which results in the loss of livelihood and disruption of their children's education.

The level of education among women of denotified communities is very low. Since the very nature of their livelihood requires them to frequently move around, they are not able to send their children to schools. Children also take active part in income generating activities in many of these communities which work as street acrobats or magicians. Since men including boys go out for work, women and girls stay at home attending to various household responsibilities. 62 percent of the respondents interviewed under the survey are illiterate. Only 13 percent are educated upto the level of primary school. The percentage of girls in the category of graduate or above was found to be as low as 5 percent.

There is also sharp variation among communities. Level of education was found to be even lower among Qalanders who are Muslims, and Gadia Lohars, who live in small J J clusters, and Nats who either perform on streets or sell flowers or other items to people passing by. Qalanders also prefer to send their girls to Madarsa rather than a regular school. One may be surprised to know that the level of education among girls in denotified communities is even far below than that of Scheduled Casts & Scheduled Tribes.

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Women prefer separate schools for girls as sexual harassment by members of other communities is the main reason of their obvious reluctance. Due to the compulsion of migrating from one place to another for livelihood, and the frequent displacement of their settlements by authorities, it is difficult for their children especially the girls to be regular in schools.

There is a need for residential school for these children especially for their girls. Since the parents of these children are very poor and are forced to migrate very frequently to earn their living, the facility of residential schools will considerably increase the school enrolment and reduce the dropout rate. Residential schools for children of Denotified & Nomadic Communities have been very successful in Maharashtra. Though Govt of NCT of Delhi is running an Ashram School for these children but that is not enough considering the large population of these communities in the capital.

A lot superstitions prevail in Denotified & Nomadic Communities, which are attached to various health disorders. Due to poverty and ignorance, many people in these communities still prefer treatment through black magic and tona totka. Therefore there is a need to create a health awareness among denotified and nomadic communities so that the communities begin taking access to government health facilities.

Most of the deliveries take place at home with the help of untrained dais. More than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of services available at government hospitals. They are very crowded and there is fear of wage loss. Since most of the people are very poor, they can't afford private nursing homes which are very expensive to afford. Even during the time of deliveries, their men are often out of homes to earn their livelihood. The interviews with respondents also revealed that there was lack of awareness about ante-natal and post natal care. Besides poverty, ignorance is the main reason for these people not availing the benefits of govt. health facilities.

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Majority of people from Denotified & Nomadic Communities want to earn their livelihood through their traditional occupations as the alternative sources of income for them are limited due to lack of resources and lack of skills. Qalanders are still engaged in their traditional occupation of holding street shows of monkeys. Some of them hold magic shows. Earlier many of them had bears too. But due the enactment of ‘Wildlife Protection Act’ and ‘*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*’, they are not allowed now to keep bears and hold their shows. Some of them have begun selling precious stones. Even for this they are forced to pay bribe to police. Otherwise they are picked up under the Prevention of Begging Act and sent to beggars home. Same is the story of Nats, who also perform acrobatic shows on the streets.

That most of the women of Denotified and Nomadic Communities take care of various responsibilities such as cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning house, taking care of children etc. Women from these communities are very hard working. A large number of them go out to earn as well as take care of household activities. Fetching water is also a major responsibility of women. Most of them were willing to work and earn some supplementary income for their families. They have a liking for knitting, stitching, embroidery, making mud toys, handicrafts and other decorative articles. But they need some training and resources to begin their own small enterprises.

Begging is common among denotified and nomadic communities. When there is nothing else to do, they especially women and children just go for begging. But begging, as they say, is full of hazards. Sometimes they are caught begging by the police under the Prevention of Begging Act, and taken to remand homes. Young girls begging on streets face sexual harassment by goons roaming around.

Some of the women especially from Kanjars are in prostitution. But when asked about this they deny and protest. But it is evident that some of these communities might have practiced it long time ago, but none of them wants to do it by choice now. Some of the women and girls also work as rag pickers. Many of them can be seen roaming in the

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streets with polythene bags on their shoulders for collecting waste like paper, plastic, tins and bottles. Many of them suffer from skin diseases and other ailments as they are continuously in contact with garbage.

Occupational profile of women vary significantly from community to community. In Kanjars, Nat and Gadia Lohar communities, women are almost equal partners in income generating activities. They are very hard working and laborious. They earn as well as take care of household responsibilities such as cooking, washing clothes and cleaning the house, and caring for children. Women among Qalanders and Rai Sikhs mainly remain inside their homes. Men don't like their women to work outside. But still some women from Qalander community work as rag pickers. Many Sansi women from Majnu Ka Tila sell paper made flags alongside the roads or in buses. Some of them sell liquors and also go for begging. Women and girls from Nat community take active part in holding street acrobatic shows. Recently some of them have also begun selling flowers and other small items on the street.

Women were willing to learn new skills and work to earn extra income for the family. They have a liking for knitting, stitching, embroidery, stuffed toys and handicrafts. But lack of capital and marketing skills is a major handicap. Besides, women also take keen interest in animal husbandry. If given enough incentives and loans on low interest, it can generate extra income and supplement the diet of the family members.

Almost all families belonging to these communities are very poor, and live just hand to mouth. Even survival is a constant struggle for them with their daily earnings being very low and hardly enough to sustain the entire family.

Various laws passed by State and Central Government since independence, have adversely affected the livelihood opportunities of Denotified & Nomadic Communities. In 1952, Criminal Tribes Act was repealed and around 150 communities were denotified. But unfortunately soon after that many state governments passes 'Habitual Offenders Act' a similar act, which not only stigmatized them again but

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curtailed their freedom. A number of communities which traditionally have been earning their livelihood by holding street shows are harassed and frequently booked under ‘Prevention of Begging Act’, 1959. Likewise, many communities such as Qalanders and Saperas were deprived of their livelihood by ‘Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960’, without any alternative source of earning or relief offered.

Survey data shows preference of boys against girls in matters of childbirth. When asked this question, 73 percent of the respondents showed their preference for boys. There was a marked discrimination against women & girls in matters of providing health services also. It was a common perception that since women are to stay at home, they will get well with time on their own. Many of them held the view that nature has made a woman’s body tough to fight a disease.

These women are not only the victims of neglect and exploitation by people from outside community, but also suffer tremendous pain and agony inflicted by their own people within the family. The life of a nomad is very hard and difficult surrounded by circumstances full of trauma, agony and turbulence, from which their women suffer the most. Drinking is in common use in most of the denotified and nomadic communities. This has been an integral part of their food habits for centuries. Incidents of domestic violence were reported by many women inflicted mostly by their husbands under the influence of alcohol. Women bear all this in silence as it is considered the fundamental right of a husband to beat his wife. These cases are mostly not reported.

The status of women in Denotified and Nomadic communities varies. Women who are actively engaged in income generating activities such as in Gadia Lohars, Nats, Kanjars and Sansi enjoy more freedom compared to those from Qalanders, Saperas and Rai Sikhs. Many of these communities have been traditionally engaged or forced into various petty crimes such as pickpocketing, theft, sale of illicit liquor etc. Women and children often see their houses being visited by police, beating their family members and booking them under various laws.

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No evidence of cast prostitution was found in the Denotified & Nomadic communities surveyed under this study in Delhi. Some of the women from this section of society may be involved in the prostitution due to poverty or other reasons but this can't be generalized or for this the entire community can't be blamed. Unfortunately other communities hold a very negative and biased opinion about these people especially about their women due to the stigma of criminality being carried by these communities for centuries. This is also due to the lack of inter community interaction.

Most of these communities have their own cast Panchayats. These cast Panchayats are called to settle disputes mainly related to matrimony, marital discords and property disputes. Caste Panchayats among denotified communities are men dominated. The representation as well as participation of women in these panchayats are either almost negligible or very low. Though the caste Panchayats are gradually losing their authority but they are still accessed by people because getting justice from judicial system is expensive and time taking. It was reported by many women during the interviews that in most of the cases, Caste Panchayats are biased against women, and give judgments, which are unjust and don't protect their rights. In many cases, women are not even given opportunity to be present and offer their arguments.

These communities are victims of social stigma and prejudice for centuries. The mainstream society is still not ready to accept them as equals. They are still perceived as criminals. The communities complain of police being highly biased against them. Some of the respondents from Sansi and Rai Sikh communities said that there have been many cases of members of these communities falsely implicated by police.

These women are not only the victims of neglect and exploitation by people from outside community, but also suffer tremendous pain and agony inflicted by their own people within the family. The life of a nomad is very hard and difficult surrounded by circumstances full of trauma, agony and turbulence, from which their women suffer the most.

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## **2. Introduction**

### **2. 1 Statement of the Problem**

In 1871, the British passed the "Criminal Tribes Act" and notified about 150 tribes in India as criminal tribes. This draconian act gave the police wide powers to have surveillance on them, restrict their freedom of movement from one place to another and arrest any one of these communities on slightest of suspicion without warrant.

In 1947, Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee was constituted in the United Province, which recommended ways to settle them and adopt adequate welfare measures for their proper rehabilitation.

In 1949, a committee was established under the chairmanship of Mr. Ananthsayanam Ayyangar, which submitted its report in 1950 and made several recommendations for the repeal of the Act. The Government of India accepted some of the recommendations of the Ayyangar Committee. It repealed the Criminal Tribes Act with effect from 31 August 1952 by the Criminal Tribes (Repeal) Act, 1952 (Act No XXIV of 1952). And this is how they came to be known as Denotified Communities.

Ironically In 1959, "Habitual Offender's Act" was passed by many state governments again subjecting them to the same social stigma of criminality or born criminals. There is no doubt that even after so many decades of independence, these communities are still one of the most neglected and marginalized social groups of Indian society.

A nomad is a person with no settled home, who moves from place to place as a way of obtaining food, finding pasture for livestock, or otherwise making a living. The word nomad comes from a Greek word that means one who wanders for pasture. Most nomadic groups follow a fixed annual or seasonal pattern of movements and settlements. Nomadic peoples traditionally travel by animal or on foot. Today, some nomads travel by motor vehicle. Most nomads live in tents or other portable shelters.



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In 2006, a National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes was constituted under the chairmanship of Shri Balkrishna Sidram Renke. After visiting DNT settlements all over the country, and holding hectic consultations with stakeholders the commission submitted its report on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2008. It made several recommendations to the Govt. of India about how to improve the living standard of these communities.

Various laws passed by State and Central Government since independence, have adversely affected the livelihood opportunities of Denotified & Nomadic Communities. In 1952, Criminal Tribes Act was repealed and around 150 communities were denotified. But unfortunately soon after that many state governments passes ‘Habitual Offenders Act’ a similar act, which not only stigmatized them again but curtailed their freedom. A number of communities which traditionally have been earning their livelihood by holding street shows are harassed and frequently booked under ‘Prevention of Begging Act’, 1959. Likewise, many communities such as Qalanders and Saperas were deprived of their livelihood by ‘Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960’, without any alternative source of earning or relief offered.

Almost all families belonging to these communities are very poor, and live just hand to mouth. Even survival is a constant struggle for them with their daily earnings being very low and hardly enough to sustain the entire family.

Housing is one of the major problems of these communities. Since most of them have been nomadic and have been wandering in the past to earn their living, they never had a permanent home or settlement. The overall conditions prevailing in the slums and J J Clusters inhabited by these communities are horrible. Most of the families put up their Jhuggis in a slum or at a vacant patch of land alongside the road as they can’t afford an accommodation. The condition of living even in resettlement colonies is not better.

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Most of the families don't have enough space in their houses to have a separate toilet. So most of the people either use public toilets or go into open field. Even the women have to go to defecate in the open. If given a choice, people are ready to build and use toilets at home. Open defecation is a major cause of poor community sanitation, and a threat to public health. Women are more vulnerable to various infections.

Most of these communities also don't have access to safe drinking water. Either there is no tapped water or it is far away from the settlement. It is often the duty of the women and adolescent girls to go and collect water.

Displacement of their settlement by local authorities is a one of the major problems faced by these communities. They are considered to be illegal or unauthorized encroachers or occupants by government agencies and other communities. The families remain under the constant fear of being displaced which results in the loss of livelihood and disruption of their children's education.

The level of education among women of denotified communities is very low. Since the very nature of their livelihood requires them to frequently move around, they are not able to send their children to schools. Added to this, children are also a part of their profession of many of these communities which work as street acrobats or magicians. Because, men including boys go out for work, women and girls stay at home attending to various household responsibilities.

Most of the deliveries take place at home with the help of untrained dais. More than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of services available at government hospitals. They are very crowded and there is fear of wage loss. Since most of the people are very poor, they can't afford private nursing homes which are very expensive to afford. Even during the time of deliveries, their men are often out of homes to earn their livelihood. The interviews with respondents also revealed that there was lack of awareness about ante-natal and post natal care. Besides poverty,

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ignorance is the main reason for these people not availing the benefits of govt. health facilities.

Women of these communities are not only the victims of neglect and exploitation by people from outside community, but also suffer tremendous pain and agony inflicted by their own people within the family. The life of a nomad is very hard and difficult surrounded by circumstances full of trauma, agony and turbulence, from which their women suffer the most. Drinking is in common use in most of the denotified and nomadic communities. This has been an integral part of their food habits for centuries. Incidents of domestic violence were reported by many women inflicted mostly by their husbands under the influence of alcohol. Women bear all this in silence as it is considered the fundamental right of a husband to beat his wife. These cases are mostly not reported.

Most of the Denotified and Nomadic communities have their own cast Panchayats. These cast Panchayats are called to settle disputes mainly related to matrimony, marital discords and property disputes. Caste Panchayats among denotified communities are men dominated. The representation as well as participation of women in these panchayats are either almost negligible or very low. In most of the cases, Caste Panchayats are biased against women, and give judgments, which are unjust and don't protect their rights. In many cases, women are not even given opportunity to be present and offer their arguments.

There is a marked preference of boys against girls in matters of childbirth, and discrimination against women & girls in matters of providing health services also. It was a common perception that since women are to stay at home, they will get well with time on their own. Many of them held the view that nature has made a woman's body tough to fight a disease.

Many of these communities have been traditionally engaged or forced into various petty crimes such as pickpocketing, theft, sale of illicit liquor etc. Women and children

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often see their houses being visited by police, beating their family members and booking them for under various laws. These women are victims of social stigma and prejudice for centuries. The mainstream society is still not ready to accept them as equals. They are still perceived as criminals. The communities complain of police being highly biased against them.

That most of the women of Denotified and Nomadic Communities take care of various responsibilities such as cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning house, taking care of children etc. Women from these communities are very hard working. A large number of them go out to earn as well as take care of household activities.

Some of the women and girls also work as rag pickers. Many of them can be seen roaming in the streets with polythene bags on their shoulders for collecting waste like paper, plastic, tins and bottles. Many of them suffer from skin diseases and other ailments as they are continuously in contact with garbage. Begging is common among denotified and nomadic communities. When there is nothing else to do, they especially women and children just go for begging. But begging, as they say, is full of hazards. Sometimes they are caught begging by the police under the Prevention of Begging Act, and taken to remand homes. Young girls begging on streets face sexual harassment by goons roaming around.

Majority of people from Denotified & Nomadic Communities want to earn their livelihood through their traditional occupations as the alternative sources of income for them are limited due to lack of resources and lack of skills.

The women of these communities have a liking for knitting, stitching, embroidery, making mud toys, handicrafts and other decorative articles. These women are willing to learn new skills and work to earn extra income for the family. But lack of capital and marketing skills is a major handicap. Besides, women also take keen interest in animal husbandry. If given enough incentives and loans on low interest, it can generate extra income and supplement the diet of the family members.

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## **2.2 Significance of the Study**

Though some academic work has been done on the socio-economic status of denotified communities in Delhi but many of these studies were conducted a long time back, and therefore have become irrelevant with time. Moreover, most of them did not focus on specific issues related to women. Thus there was a need to conduct a new study, which is based on present day socio-economic status and realities.

The present study has tried to develop a deep insight into various problems faced by women of Denotified & Nomadic communities in Delhi. The study addressed various socio-economic issues concerning women with a human rights perspective of women.

The study was also aimed at having an objective assessment of the problems of women of denotified and nomadic communities in Delhi, and the effectiveness of various welfare programmes and interventions undertaken by the government to help these women enjoy a full and decent life with dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration. It looked into the qualitative as well as quantitative changes taking place as a result of their interaction with other communities in an effort to improve the quality of life of women, and efforts to remove the barriers for their full and effective participation in social and economic development. The study also examined the needs of special care focusing on the most vulnerable women belonging to Denotified & Nomadic communities.

## **2.3 Objectives of the Study**

- To develop deep insight into the socio-economic factors responsible for the problem of Women of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in Delhi
- To assesses their socio-economic status and their impact on their lives
- To appraise the effectiveness of various government schemes and interventions targeting the prevention of various atrocities and their rehabilitation.

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- To evaluate coordination among various government agencies dealing with this problem.
- To assess the role of voluntary organizations working at grass root level and engaged in creating awareness, providing counseling and rehabilitative services.
- To give suggestions and recommendations to the govt. about new methods and approaches to tackle their problems.

#### **2.4 Limitations of the Study**

Conducting a research study on denotified and nomadic communities in any part of the county is no doubt a challenging task for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, due to continued marginalization, these communities perceive any intervention from outside community with suspicion and distrust. Since despite of various government programmes and schemes failed to bring about any substantial improvement in their lives, they don't seem to be much enthusiastic now about the outcome of various surveys and studies. It is reflected by what one of the respondents said, “What is the use of these interviews and surveys? Many people come and collect data. We are tired of giving interviews. But nothing has changed in our lives”.

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### 3. Theoretical Framework & Review of Literature

Denotified & Nomadic communities in India especially their women have been victims of social prejudice, neglect, discrimination and exploitation for centuries. Many of them don't have houses of their own to live and still keep moving around from one place to another in order to survive. The literacy rate among them is abysmally low with a large number of school going children out of school and begging on the streets for living. Balkrishna Renke Report of 'National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes', Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, 2008 also writes about the status of women of these communities.

*"An important aspect of inequality in human society is the gender. Since majority of societies in the world happen to be patrilineal and male-dominated, women among them are denied several rights, and are discriminated. Not only that, even in matrilineal societies, which can be counted on finger tips, women suffer from several social, cultural, and economic handicaps. Though women all over the world are victims of discrimination, their condition is immeasurably bad and pitiable in Denotified and Nomadic tribes. Their vulnerability to exploitation is particularly high because of the precarious condition of their communities, which are poor and socially excluded".<sup>1</sup>*

Milind Bokil in his article 'Facing Exclusion: The Nomadic Communities in Western India' (Paper published in The Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol. 63, I, January 2002), writes;

*"There were also some nomadic groups who were termed as 'criminal tribes' during the British Rule. The British dominion considerably changed the ecological, social, political and economic systems of rural India. As a result, a number of communities*

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<sup>1</sup> Balkrishna Renke Report of 'National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes', Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, 2008

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*lost their traditional means of livelihoods and had to resort to theft, stealing and other criminal activities. There was also an element of protest against the British rule. The colonial British administration enacted the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 to control these communities and notified them as criminal tribes. The Act, however, was based on the fallacious understanding of Indian society, particularly the caste system. It was conveniently believed that certain communities were professionally criminal and crime was their caste, occupation as well as religion. The provisions of the Act were extremely oppressive. Every member of the notified community was compelled to register himself/herself at the local police station and had to give ‘Hajeri’ (attendance) at a specified time of the day. Their movements were curtailed. They could not shift their residence at will and had to take proper permission before any travel or migration. The penalties for breaking these rules were quite severe. The Act was modified from time to time. A compendium on the criminal tribes was also published by the police authorities (Kennedy, 1908). Later on, colonies or settlements of these communities were created at a number of places in order to rehabilitate them. These settlements were just short of jails as they were surrounded with barbed wire and the inmates faced similar types of restrictions. The Criminal Tribes Act was repealed after Independence and these communities were ‘de-notified’. However, the change in nomenclature neither altered their material status nor removed the social stigma. They have continued to be the victims of police atrocities and societal ridicule. In India, the de-notified and nomadic tribes (DNTs) present a classic case of social exclusion”.<sup>2</sup>*

Besides social stigma of criminality, women of these communities also suffer from exploitation by their own families in the name of tradition. About the status of women in Denotified & Nomadic Communities, Milind Bokil writes;

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<sup>2</sup> Milind Bokil, ‘Facing Exclusion: The Nomadic Communities in Western India’ (Paper published in The Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol. 63, I, January 2002)



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*“Excepting a few, all the nomadic groups are patriarchal in nature. The authority of the elderly males is considered supreme. The status of women is extremely low and very often, brutal sanctions are imposed on them”.*

Narrating his own life story, Shri Laxman Gaikwad, the noted social activist and Marathi writer says that he had to face a lot of struggle to survive as a human being. The time has come when women and girls need to be made aware of fighting for their own rights. He writes;

*‘I, as a child, have witnessed a lot of violence and atrocities being committed on women & children of Denotified communities as they are helpless and can’t protest. People from outside would come and force women and girls to have sex with them, as if it is their right to do so. Police also remain a silent spectator. It will always side with the rich and powerful. Women & children are also traumatized when they see police brutally beat up their men and put them in jails for no faults of theirs.’<sup>3</sup>*

Talking about the problems of people of Denotified & Nomadic Communities, Ms. Matrai Pushpa, a noted Hindi writer says,

*“When I thought of writing ‘Alma Kabutri”, I wondered if a subject on the lives of these people who are so down to earth, and are considered to be almost a nonentity, can be of any interest to the readers. I have observed their lives very closely since childhood. I often saw them being beaten by police and public so mercilessly as if they are not even human beings, I wonder how human being can be so prejudiced and insensitive towards each other.’<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Seminar Report ‘Socio-Economic Status of Women of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in India organized by ‘Sarhak’ in Delhi

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

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‘National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes’ in its report also highlights the same aspect of social exclusion of these communities.

*‘Women have no role in these traditional councils and face discrimination. These councils need to be sensitised and there is a need to incorporate women into these councils for gender equity. In general, the traditional councils play an important role and they need to be involved not only in dispute resolution but even in development interventions.’<sup>5</sup>*

The Government of NCT of Delhi has taken some measures about the development of these communities. ‘National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes’ in its report has also mentioned about this.

*‘The Government of NCT of **Delhi** has stated that the **Delhi Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBC, Minorities Financial and Development Corporation**, an undertaking of Government of NCT of Delhi, is taking care of the needs of these communities figuring in SC and OBC list of Delhi. For the welfare of Denotified in Delhi, the State Government has a separate programme called ‘Scheme for Welfare Centre for Denotified Tribes’ through which vocational training in crafts, tailoring, sewing, embroidery, food and nutrition are imparted to women and girls of Denotified communities. To provide institutional care, educational and moral development to the children of Denotified communities in Delhi, residential homes have been set up by the Government of NCT of Delhi under the **Scheme for Sanskar Ashram**. Another **Scheme for Economic Rehabilitation of Denotified Tribes-Allotment of Industrial Sheds** has also been implemented by the Government of NCT of Delhi.’<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> Balkrishna Renke Report of ‘National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes’, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

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## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1. Research Design**

The present study adopted an exploratory-cum-descriptive design to gather the relevant information and data. The exploratory design was chosen in order to collect basic statistical data to have an in-depth knowledge of the socio-economic status of women of these communities as well as the impact of various laws on their livelihood and their relationship with other communities. The descriptive design was helpful in getting to know the inner most feelings, views and attitudes of the respondents. The study also tried to critically evaluate the impact of various welfare programme and schemes meant for the development of these communities, and identify influencing factors, and make necessary recommendations for the alternative strategies, which can in turn, be used in the formulation of new policies.

The method of collecting information was participatory. The respondents of the survey were made to feel at ease while responding to various questions. The respondents were fully assured that their identity will be kept confidential. This made them very comfortable in sharing their problems, views and opinions freely with confidence. The study report thus reflects the perception of community on various issues.

### **4.2 Selection of the Universe of the Study**

The study focused on women of denotified and nomadic communities settled or working in Delhi. It covered settlements of these communities in all districts of the state. Many of the Denotified & Nomadic communities keep shifting their settlements either due to displacement by local authorities or migration to other places in search for better livelihood opportunities. Therefore, the study covered permanent, semi-permanent and temporary habitats of communities. There is no record available of social mapping conducted of these communities in Delhi either by government or any other voluntary organization. Thus the study focused on identified settlements of these

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communities spread across all the districts of the state. The unit for data collection was household. All the respondents interviewed in this survey were women between the age group of 18 to 65.

#### **4.3 Sample Size**

The sample size of the study was 1600 respondents. The study covered 8 Denotified and Nomadic communities i.e. Qalandar, Gadia Lohar, Sapera, Nat, Bhat, Sanshi, Rai Sikh and Kanjar. 200 respondents from each community were interviewed. The criteria for the selection of the communities for this study was based on the coverage of maximum socio-economic variation and their geographical spread across the state. It included social variables such as their habitation, socio-economic status, nature and pattern of livelihood etc.

#### **4.4. Tools/Instruments of Study**

- Interview Schedules
- Community Profiles
- Focused Group Discussions
- Analytical Observation
- Documentation of Interviews
- Focused Group Meetings with Community Leaders
- Consultation with Experts & Policy Makers
- Study of Records & Literature available

With the help of interview schedule and community profile, the necessary data and information were collected on various socio-economic issues concerning women of denotified and nomadic communities. Different sets of interview schedules were designed and used for different categories of respondents.

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#### **4.5 Issues covered under the Study**

1. Habitat/Settlement: Types of houses, Basic Civic Amenities available, Community Sanitation & Hygiene
2. Access to Education: Level of Education & Reasons of School Dropout
3. Access to Health Facilities
4. Access to Livelihood opportunities
5. Access to Welfare Entitlements
6. Gender Equality & Domestic Violence
7. Participation of Women in Cast Panchayats
8. Impact of various laws and legislative measures on the socio-economic status of women of these communities

The study was conducted by a team of trained field investigators and researchers well oriented with the background of the community, study design and methodology to be adopted for collection of data. Team members visited community settlements and held focused interviews with respondents, and collected relevant information after establishing a cordial rapport with community. Meetings were also held with community leaders in which their problems were discussed at length, and their opinion and views were sought. While conducting interviews, extra care was taken in maintaining the comfort and convenience of the respondents.

- Survey: The sample size for the primary survey was decided on the basis of the approximate number of settlements of DNTs and the population of each community. Accordingly, respondents were selected in each community on a convenient random basis. Specially designed questionnaire schedules were prepared and canvassed through trained and locally hired investigators to generate quantitative data.

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- Interactive sessions with concerned stakeholders: Interactive sessions with community leaders, civil society groups working at grass root level, government officials concerned with running various welfare programmes, and other stakeholders were held to gather relevant data and information.
- Collection of secondary data: Visits were made to various departments and agencies in the state to collect information and relevant material in the form of books, journals and reports.

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## **5. Brief Profiles of Selected Communities**

### **Sansis**

Sansi is a denotified and nomadic community originally belonging to Rajasthan. During British rule in India they were placed under Criminal Tribes Act 1871, hence stigmatized for a long time, after independence however they were denotified in 1952. Most of the Sansis in Delhi are Hindu by religion. Many Sansis in Punjab long back converted to Sikhism. They claim their lineage to saints Malang Shah and Sans Mal. According to some, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the great ruler of Punjab just before British raj, was also from Sansi community.

The main occupation of Sansis is said to be hunting. They are also stigmatized for brewing country made liquor. The community has moved on with time, and most of the people belonging to this community are living with honor and dignity now. But unfortunately the community has not been able to shrug of the stigma of criminality attached to their name for centuries.

The oldest settlements of Sansis in Delhi are Majnu Ka Tila, Andha Moghul, Mangolpuri and Kasturba Nagar. The settlement of Andha Moghul consists of Reclamation Colony and 'H' Block. The Reclamation Colony was established in 1941 to settle local Sansis of the state. Later on in 1951, people migrated at the time of partition from different places in Pakistan such as Multan, Montgomery and Lyallpur, and they were settled in H' Block of Andha Moghul. A group of Sansis settled in Majnu Ka Tila since 1959 migrated from Pakistan at the time of partition. Their first destination in Delhi was near the Red Fort from where the government shifted them to Majnu Ka Tila with each family given a plot of 25 yards.

Just after independence, Shri A.V. Thakkar under the banner of Harijan Sevak Sangh started social rehabilitation work among Sansis in Delhi. Shri Thakkar deputed Shri

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Prabhu Dayal to take up this responsibility, who dedicated his whole life for the welfare of denotified communities in Delhi. The present reclamation colony, Andha Moghal was also built then and in the year 1910 these people were shifted here from Rehgarhpura.

Most of Sansi women are brave and hard working. They take care of their household responsibilities as well as are active partners in earning income for the family. There is a wide gap among various groups of community with regard to the standard of living. As a result, some of them have grown quite rich whereas the rest are still hand to mouth and struggle for survival.

The level of education among Sansis is very poor but has been gradually improving. But school dropout rate is still quite high. It was also revealed by many respondents that due to poverty many families want even their daughters to drop out of schools and make them earn to supplement the family income. Most of the families don't seem to be aware of the importance of education. Earlier there was a tradition of bride price, which means dowry used to be paid by the family of bridegroom. But now the dowry is paid by family of bride. Widow marriage is not welcome in Sansi society.

There is no fixed income. Most of the people are daily wage earners. Women are actively engaged in Liquor selling which brings them into contact with bad elements, further vitiating the whole community atmosphere. Besides alcohol, young boys are also becoming addicted to drugs endangering their health. Most of the people live in their pucca houses, but community sanitation is still very poor. Community complains against police harassment and atrocities. According to them, police is biased and prejudiced against them, and still treats them as criminals.



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**Gadia Lohar**



Gadia Lohar are also known as Gadulia Lohar. They are a nomadic community which originally came from Rajasthan. They are lohar (ironsmith) by profession who move on from one place to another place on bullock carts. The bullock carts are their homes. The measure settlements of Lohar in Delhi are in Shahdara Flyover, Old Rohtak Road, Azadpur, Sarai Rohilla, Timarpur, Nangloi, Kirti Nagar, Mayapuri, Uttam Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Kalkaji Deport.

They call themselves Rajputs. According to the story told by them, after the defeat of Chittor in 1568 by the Mughal emperor Akbar, they were forced to retreat into the

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dense forests. They take a vow of not returning to return home unless Chittor is taken back and their honor and prestige restored.

Gadia Lohars want to maintain their distinct cultural identity at all cost as a result of which they prefer to live separately in small clusters. They don't like to mix easily with members of other communities. Women of Gadia Lohars are very hard working. Their mother tongue is called Mewari which is dialect of Hindi. They are very proud of their culture. In the past, Gadulia Lohars never stayed at one place or long and were always on the move. They used their bullock carts for transport with all their household belongings on the cart. But with the changing social reality and uncertainty of their trade, they now want to settle down permanently at one place.

Gadia Lohar women wear earrings, bangles, necklaces and rings. Their bangles are made of ivory. The anklets are of copper. The necklaces are made of gold and silver. The women wear bangles on their arm too, right from the shoulders. Women also wear pendant between the hair partitions and tie it to the hair. They also wear metallic waistband and nose ornament called nath.

They are usually engaged in making and repairing agricultural and household implements. They lead a hard life despite the adverse weather and the uncertainties of their trade. There was a time when the iron tools made by Gadia Lohars were in great demand. Villagers used to wait for them as these tools were very useful for household and agriculture. But with the change of time, new cheap and modern tools began appearing in market which reduced the demand for tools of Gadia Lohars. Gadia Lohar women have traditional skills in embroidery which if promoted can earn them a good income and become an alternative source of livelihood.

Housing, water & sanitation are their major problems. None of the families has built in toilet as a result almost all including women are forced to defecate in the open. Unlike Kalanders, if necessary for better opportunities of livelihood, the entire family migrate to other place. Level of education is very low. Women are not only actively

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engaged in manufacturing and repairing of iron wares, but they also sell their products in streets and weekly markets held on different days in different parts of the city.

They make their settlements besides the roads because it is easier for them to be noticed by other people and sell their goods. Houses are made of mud, wood and old plastic and tin sheets. There is only one room to sleep for the whole family with no space for kitchen, bathroom and toilet. All including women have no choice but to take their bath and defecate in the open, which is a great inconvenience. It gets even more difficult during raining season when water collects around and even gets into their tent which they call their home.

Most of the girls drop out of schools as soon as they attain puberty. They feel it unsafe for their girls especially unmarried to go out alone, as a result they are married off at an early age. Marriages are arranged by parents and with the consent of cast panchayats. In the past they had good number of livestock such as bullocks, dogs, goats, cows etc. but they have almost none of them now as there is low space of living in urban area, low income and lack of fodder.



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**Bhats**



Bhats are a nomadic community from Rajasthan. Their main settlement in Delhi is Kathputli colony near Shadipur Depot. They are living here for the last 63 years. Their traditional occupation is to hold puppet shows, sing folk songs, and perform dances. Kathputli as an art form is more than thousands years old. We also find its reference in Rajasthani folk tales. Tradition of Kathputli is based on folk tales that convey the history of Rajasthan. This nomadic community is very proud of its rich tradition of Rajasthani art and culture. Besides, puppets, they are also traditional folk art singers and dancers. The Bhat have oral traditions about their migration and glorious past. Folk songs are sung to the accompaniment of music by both men and women, who also dance at weddings.

Many of them have performed not only in different parts of India but in many countries across the world. They have photos with many heads of countries which they proudly



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display to visitors who come to their colony. But despite this, most of them still live in poverty, and are struggling for survival.

Due to the rise of modern means of entertainment, demand for puppet shows is on decline now and it is not easy now to earn the livelihood through their traditional occupation, as a result, many of them have taken to beating of drums at marriages and other occasions. They also possess traditional skills in wood carving. But lack of capital resources and marketing skills have remained a major hurdle. If given proper financial support for promotion of their rich cultural heritage, the community is capable of sustaining their livelihood.

Most of the people from older generation of Bhats are illiterate. Though people have begun sending their children to schools, level of education is still low. They are not in favour of giving higher education to their girls. Widow is often married off to the younger brother of her diseased husband. They also believe in superstitions.

Bhat women are generally very bold and hard working. Besides, doing all household chores, they also have to collect fuel wood and water for household needs. Bhat women also contribute to the family income by doing various jobs.

The sanitary conditions in the colony are very poor. Due to the lack of proper drainage system and community toilets, foul smell pervades the whole area. Children are also seen defecating in open.

In 2010, Government of NCT of Delhi formulated an insitu rehabilitation plan for these people on public-private partnership basis, according to which they are to be accommodated into multi-storied flats at the same location. But many of them have their doubts, and are not willing to accept this offer.

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**Kanjars**



Kanjar is a denotified and nomadic community. The word kanjar has been derived from the Sanskrit kanana-chara, which means wanderer in the jungle. They originally belong to Rajasthan. According to the legend popular among them, Kanjar had to flee to the jungles to avoid Mughal persecution. In the Colonial period, Kanjars were listed under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. After independence, they were denotified in 1952, when the Criminal Tribes Act was replaced with the Habitual Offenders Act, but the community continues to be victims of social stigma and marginalization.

Hunting was the traditional occupation of Kanjars, but over a period of time, many of them were forced to adopt new means of livelihood. In the past, they extracted roots of the khas grass, and collected reeds from banks of the rivers. They also make ropes

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from the stalks of the munji grass and sell them around as hawkers. The community is also involved in tanning of skins out of which drums are made and sold. Kanjars are also involved in trapping birds and animals, which they sell to local traders. Those who have settled in towns and cities now also earn their livelihood as wage labourers and rickshaw pullers.

Kanjars are also traditionally involved in making and selling of terracotta toys walking around as hawkers from door to door. They supplement this activity through begging as well as entertaining through singing and dancing.

Kanjar women are very good singers and dancers, but most of them now use that for begging. They also earn their livelihood through working as waste collectors. Some of them sell utensils exchanging them with old cloths, and also sell toys in weekly markets. Kanjar community has its own cast panchayat which decides community disputes mainly related to matrimonial discords. Kanjars living in Delhi is an extremely poor community. Most of them are still in a nomadic state wandering around begging for livelihood or mere survival.



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#### **Rai Sikh**

Rai Sikh were declared a criminal tribe under the Criminal Tribes Act by the British colonial authorities in India. After independence, they were denotified in 1952, when the Criminal Tribes Act was replaced with the Habitual Offenders Act. Rai Sikh are members of the Mahtam ethnic group who have converted to the Sikh faith. Rai Sikh are considered to be very brave. As per their history they fearlessly fought against Mughal rulers, and as a consequence were uprooted from their original homes. They also raised arms against British regime and participated very actively in 1857 mutiny and freedom movement.

Traditionally, Rai Sikh, as a community has been associated with hunting of pigs, rope making and the manufacture of a particular type of net used for snaring wild boars. Their settlements were found mainly along river banks, where the community harvested reed. The Rai Sikhs are also known as very hard working cultivators.

Major Rai Sikh settlements in Delhi are in Jaitpur village, Chhatarpur village, Jhangola, Alipur Narela etc. They originally belong to Rawalpindi and Bhawalpur in Pakistan and migrated to India at the time of partition. They first came to a camp in Punjab, and then were made to settle near Yamuna Khadar in around 1951, where agricultural land was allotted to them in 1970. Even under adverse circumstances, the community was able to make good progress and improving his economic status but this development came to a halt when in 1990 most of their land was acquired by government for NTPC power project at the rate of seventy thousand per acre. Besides, cultivation, they also brewed and sold liquor for subsistence in the past, but most of them barring a few have given it up.

Level of education is low in this community. It is even worse among women. Most of the children drop out of school before completing their matriculation. Due to their low status in society, their children are discriminated against by teachers and children of



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other communities as reported to us during interviews. This social discrimination is considered to be one of the main reasons for a very high rate of school dropout in Jaitpur village.

The community is highly stigmatized. According to them, police is biased against them, and their children are booked in false cases by the police, which still considers them as born criminals. There is a need to sensitize the police and community for this.

This society is male dominated. Men don't prefer or don't allow women to work outside. Most of the women stay at home. They are Sikh by religion but they are not treated as equal and looked down upon by other dominant Sikh casts. Rai Sikhs are listed in OBCs in Delhi, and one of their demands is to be included in Scheduled Casts.



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## Qalandars



The Qalandars are a Muslim ethnic group also known as Qalander Faqir. The Qalandar in India trace their origin back to the devotees of the Sufi saint Bu Ali Shah Qalandar, who is buried in Panipat, in what is now Haryana. Initially, these devotees belonged to the Sufi order of the Qalandariyah Faqirs, who then took to the profession of bear fighting. The major settlements of Qalandars in Delhi are in Dilshad Garden, Shahbad Dairy and Shadipur.

Most of Qalandars In North India, a part of these people started leading bears, monkeys and other performing animals with which they wander, announcing the presence with an hour glass shaped drum called a damru, which is used in their performances for emphasis, while a larger part of these people settled in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal and started settled life though continuing the old traditional mystic religious beliefs.

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Some of them get connected to different khanqah in Bihar especially in Bihar Sharif and Danapur. Historically, all Qalandars were once a nomadic community, but many are now settled.

In 1972, bear hunting and capturing were declared illegal in India, and there has been persistent effort by the Indian government to clamp down on the activity of bear performing. In addition, the traditional occupation of bear fighting has come to much criticism from the animal rights activists in the west, and have now been proscribed by India. Qalandars are now daily wage labourers, and they are extremely marginalized community, both socially and economically.

A large number of Qalandars is still nomadic, involved in their traditional occupations of entertainment routines involving trained bears and monkeys. In addition, they are often skilled jugglers, acrobats, magicians, impersonators and beggars. The Qalandars travel from community to community, setting camp in fallow fields. They are an extremely marginalized group, suffering from discrimination and often victims of abuse by state officials such as the police or municipal staff.

Qalandar Colony near Dilshad Garden is around 50 years old. Level of education is low. Most of the people are illiterate. Some people have begun sending their children to schools, but they prefer madarsa schools to give their children religious teaching. Qalandars are a conservative society. Most of them don't want their women to work outside. But some women were reported to be involved in rag picking and goat rearing. The family size among this community is also big.

Community sanitation is very poor. There is no proper drainage system. People defecate in the open. As a result, the whole area is infested with flies and mosquitos. The school dropout among children is very high. Most of the children leave school even before their primary education. Qalandars have their cast panchayats which settles mainly matrimonial and property disputes.



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**Nats**



The Nats, a nomadic community have been entertaining as acrobats and jugglers for centuries. Young girls and women of Nat community perform the rope-dance on tight ropes tied to a centrally fixed bamboo while their men beat drums to attract an audience. The name of the tribe is taken from the Sanskrit word 'nata' a dancer. Mr. Crooks describes them as 'a class of gypsy dancers, acrobats and prostitutes who are found scattered all over the Province'. In the past Nats used to enjoy royal patronage for their living, amusing the rulers and their guests with their acrobatic performances. They also entertained people in villages and towns through acrobatic shows, music and dance.

Nats are one of the most poor and marginalized nomadic communities. Most of them don't even have cast certificates and election Identity cards as a result, they are not able to take benefits of any of the welfare entitlements.

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Children in this community are trained in these skills from an early childhood. The community wander about holding acrobatic street shows to earn their livelihood. Majority of them are very poor and are still in nomadic state. They are scattered in small groups and don't stay at one place for long. Among Nats, the whole family including women and children are actively engaged in street shows. In the past, people in rural area used to wait for them and appreciate their art, but due to increasing urbanization and availability of different means of entertainment, their status has been reduced to that of beggars.

The level of education is extremely low in Nat community. One of the reason for this is the active involvement of children in their acrobatic shows. Children especially girls are trained from early childhood for this. When asked why you don't send your children to schools, they say if we do that how will the family survive. Without the help of children they can't hold their street shows. So in order to help their children attend schools, the families need to be provided some special financial incentives to look for other alternative livelihood. Nats usually don't prefer to be a part of the slum. They will often make their makeshift houses near the railway tracks or vacant piece of land along the road. Their houses are made of pieces of woods and old plastic sheets collected from waste.

Nat children as young as four years old can be seen performing on the streets of Delhi. Some of them frequently cross roads to sell flowers to people in cars stopped at crossings, which certainly is a major health risk. Nats don't marry outside their community, but they are required to marry outside their clan. Marriage is settled through negotiation among parents or elders. Bride price is prevalent among the poorer Nats and is paid in cash. Child marriages are common among the Nats but the departure of the bride to her husband's home is performed only after her attaining puberty.

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## Sapera



Sapera is a denotified and nomadic community which originally belongs to Rajasthan and traditionally works as snake charmers. There was a time when India was known as a country of snake charmers. They are also known as Nath Saperas, and have scheduled caste status in Delhi. They are very expert snake catchers, and are often called in by villagers to catch snakes and remove the snake poison. A small number of Saperas has also been involved in the manufacture of a coarse rope called the munj. A large number of people from this community is still in nomadic stage, but some of them now have their permanent settlements. The community is extremely poor and marginalized. The major settlements of Saperas in Delhi are Gharoli, Molarband, Madanpur Khadar and Ali village. Gharoli and Molarband are around 150 year old settlement of Saperas.

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Most Saperas are Hindu by faith, although a small number has converted to Islam, and form a distinct community known as Muslim Saperas. The Hindu Saperas are followers of the Shakti cult and worship the goddess Kali. Saperas settled in Delhi and covered under this study are Hindus, but they don't cremate and still bury their dead bodies.

The Saperas are still largely involved in their traditional occupation of snake charming, as well as collecting wild roots and tubers, which they use for medicinal purposes. They are nomadic, and visit villages, often employed to catch snakes. The community is also associated with the playing the gourd pipe, known as a bin. Some of them have shown their talents not only in India but many countries of the world, but that has not helped them at all in improving their economic condition. Due to the enactment of various laws which prohibit catching and keeping of snakes and cobras, Saperas have been deprived of their centuries old occupation of snake charming. Many of them especially the youth are now engaged in drum beating at weddings and other functions.

They have their own cast panchayats which are called to settle cases mainly related to matrimonial and property disputes. Women don't have any say in these panchayats. Some of the women even complained against them of being highly biased and prejudiced against women.

Level of education is very low among Saperas. It is even worse among women, who mostly stay at home taking care of household responsibilities, and are not allowed to work outside. Many of them, though, go to collect wood as fuel and fodder for cattle. Unlike Kalbelias of Rajasthan, women from Sapera community settled in Delhi don't take part in folk dances. Many of them have traditional handicraft skills in embroidery. But unfortunately they are not able to make much use of their skills as a source of earning. If given resources and training this can be a good alternative source of livelihood for these women.

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## 6. Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

The Constitution of India has given these communities various rights including the reservation under SC, ST and OBC categories. Most of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in India are classified into various categories of Scheduled Casts, Schedules Tribes and OBCs. Government of India has also been running a number of welfare programmes and schemes for the development of this section of Indian community which is the most backward and marginalized social group.

**Table-1**  
**Religious Profile of Respondent**

Religion	Denotified & Nomadic Community
Hindus	Sansi, Kanjars, Bhat, Sapera, Gadia Lohar, Nat
Muslims	Qalanders
Sikhs	Rai Sikh

The tables show the distribution of denotified & nomadic communities across religions and their classifications under SC & OBCs

**Table-2**  
**Distribution of Denotified & Nomadic Communities across SC & OBCs in Delhi**

Denotified Community	Scheduled Cast	OBC
Qalandar		
Gadia Lohar		
Sapera		
Nat		
Bhat		
Sanshi		
Rai Sikh		
Kanjar		



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**Table-3**  
**Age Profile of Respondents**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
From 18 to less than 25	428
From 26 to less than 45	753
From 46 to less than 75	341
From 76 to Above	78
Total	1600

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## 7. Findings of the study

### 7.1 Housing & Access to Basic Amenities

Housing is one of the major problems of these communities. Since most of them have been nomadic and have been wandering in the past to earn their living, they never had a permanent home or settlement. Of the communities surveyed, Qalanders, Kanjars and Nats live in slums. Sansis on the other hand live in Resettlement Colonies. Rai Sikhs reside in the village at the outskirts of the city. Gadia Lohars, who refuse to be a part of the slum and want to maintain their distinct cultural identity have their settlements in open space alongside the roads.

**Table-4**  
**Place of Settlement**

Community	Slums	Resettlement Colony	Village	In open space alongside the Road
Qalandar				
Gadia Lohar				
Sapera				
Nat				
Bhat				
Sanshi				
Rai Sikh				
Kanjar				

Discussions held with most of the respondents also busted the myth that no matter how the government tries to settle them down by giving land or houses, these communities still prefer nomadic lifestyle. As one woman from Gadia Lohar community responded.

*'This is true that we lived like nomads in the past. But time has changed.  
We too want to settle down permanently now. This is wrong to say that we*

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*remain to be wanderers forever. We too want to send our children to schools like others. We too want to live with respect and dignity. Are we not the equal citizens of this country? This myth has been created about us only to deny our right to housing.’*

#### **7.2 Basic Amenities available in the Settlements**

The overall conditions prevailing in the slums and J J Clusters inhabited by these communities are horrible. Most of the families put up their Jhuggis in a slum or at a vacant patch of land alongside the road as they can't afford an accommodation. The condition of living even in resettlement colonies is not better. It is also a wonder as to how a family of six and seven members live in an 8feet x8 feet Jhuggi. In these settlements, it is the duty of the women and girls to go and collect water from the tap available at a distance from the slum. There is no proper drainage system as a result of which human and animal excreta are found scattered all around and emits foul smell which is a major health hazard for the residents. There is hardly any park or open space for children to play.

#### **7.3 Access to Toilet Facilities**

Most of the families don't have enough space in their houses to have a separate toilet. So most of the people either use public toilets or go into open field. Even the women have to go to defecate in the open. If given a choice, people are ready to build and use toilets at home. Open defecation is a major cause of poor community sanitation, and a threat to public health. Women are more vulnerable to various infections.

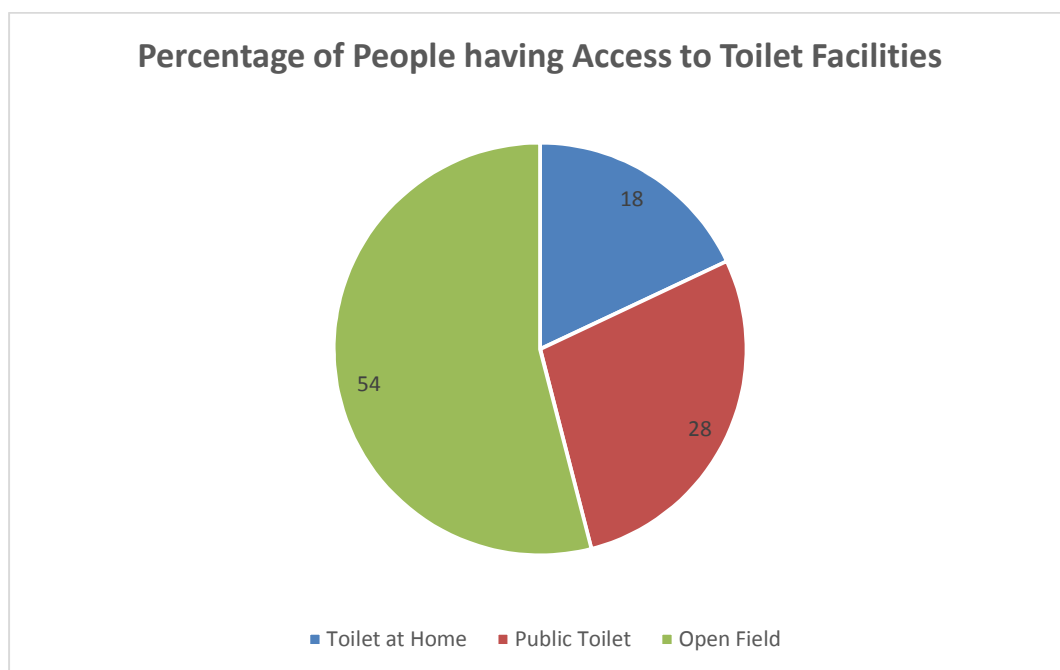
As the figure shown below indicates that only 18 percent household have toilet facilities at home. 28 percent households use public toilets but the maximum number of people 54 percent have no choice but to resort to open defecation. Going into open field is a major inconvenience for women. When asked one of the woman said.

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*‘We go for the nature's call before the daybreak, which is a major inconvenience. It is not only lack of privacy but very disgraceful and humiliating for us. Sometimes, it poses a threat to our physical security as there are a lots of drunkards and drug addicts around.’*

**Figure-1**  
**Access to Toilet Facilities**



#### **7.4 Access to Water**

Most of the households surveyed don't have access to safe drinking water. Either there is no tapped water or it is far away from the settlement. It is often the duty of the women and adolescent girls to go and collect water which is time taking and very tiring. When water is in short supply, water is used only for drinking and kitchen. Under these circumstances, people are not able to take regular baths for days and weeks which lowers the level of their personal hygiene.

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## **7.5 Displacement of Settlements**

Displacement of their settlement by local authorities is a one of the major problems faced by these communities. They are considered to be illegal or unauthorized encroachers or occupants by government agencies and other communities. The families remain under the constant fear of being displaced which results in the loss of livelihood and disruption of their children's education. In Delhi, DDA recently has announced a policy of their in situ rehabilitation. The implementation of this policy began with Kathputli Colony near Shadipur Depot, which is an old settlement in Delhi of Denotified and Nomadic communities such as Bhat, Sapera and Kalanders. One of the respondents from Nat community responded as this.

*'We have no place to call our home. We make our makeshift houses on empty plots of land which sometimes is government land and sometimes a private property. As soon as we start living, a police constable comes and asks us to leave or pay him bribe. We are left with no choice. A good amount of money earned through hard labour is taken away like this. If we stay for longer, police comes with bulldozers to demolish our settlements.'*

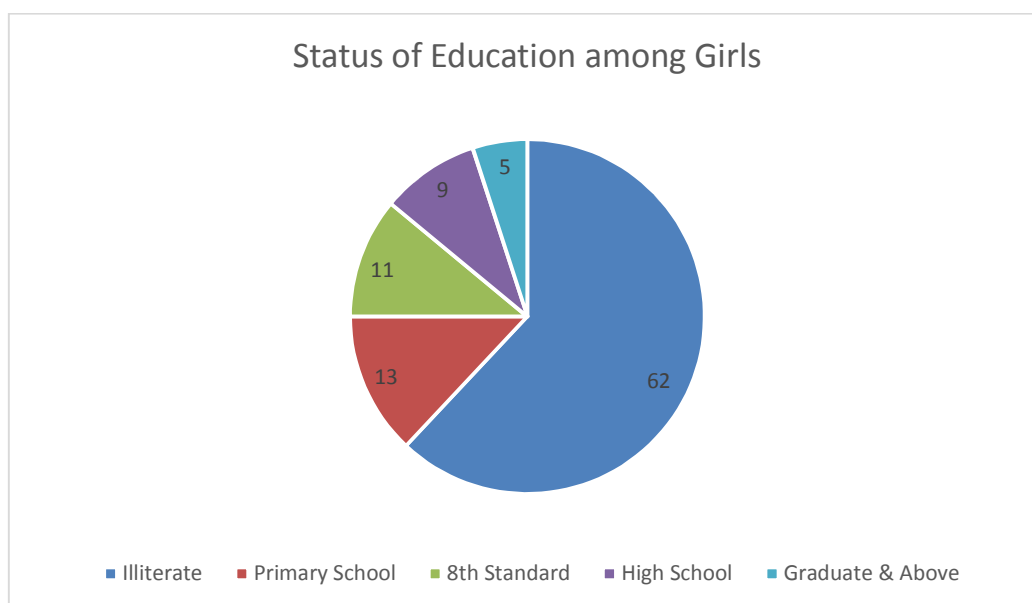
## 8. Access to Education

### 8.1 Level of Education

The level of education among women of denotified communities is very low. Since the very nature of their livelihood requires them to frequently move around, they are not able to send their children to schools. Added to this, children are also a part of their profession of many of these communities which work as street acrobats or magicians. Because, men including boys go out for work, women and girls stay at home attending to various household responsibilities.

As the data below shows that 62 percent of the respondents interviewed under the survey are illiterate. Only 13 percent are educated upto the level of primary school. The percentage of girls in the category of graduate or above was found to be as low as 5 percent.

**Figure-2**  
**Status of Education among Girls**



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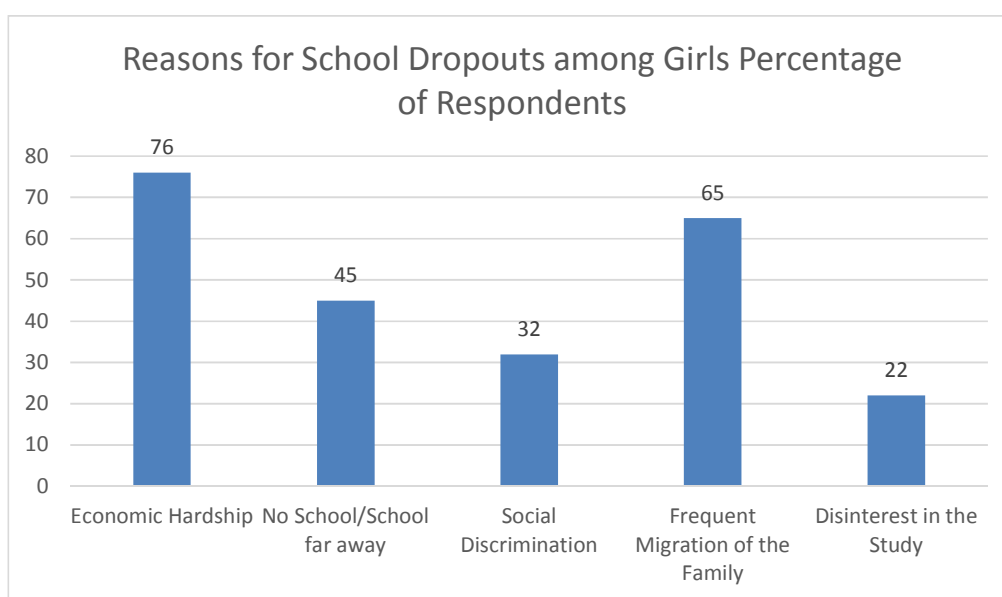
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There is also sharp variation among communities. Level of education was found to be even lower among Qalanders who are Muslims, and Gadia Lohars, who live in small J J clusters, and Nats who either perform on streets or sell flowers or other items to people passing by. Qalanders also prefers to send their girls to Madarsa rather than a regular school. One may be surprised to know that the level of education among girls in denotified communities when compared is even far below than that of Scheduled Casts & Scheduled Tribes.

### 8.2 Reasons for School Dropouts

Women prefer separate schools for girls as their past experience of girls sexual harassment from members of other community is the main reason of their obvious reluctance. Due to the compulsion of migrating from one place to another for livelihood, and the frequent displacement of their settlements by authorities, it is difficult for their children especially the girls to be regular in schools.

**Figure-3**  
**Reasons for School Dropouts among Girls**



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When asked why you dropped out of school, one girl from Nat community replied.

*‘I go along with my family to perform on the street every morning. That is how we earn our livelihood. Where is the time for me to go to school? If I attend school, my family will have to go hungry. I too had big dreams. I too wanted to study like other girls. But there was hardly any choice for me. Walking on the rope is perhaps my only destiny.’*

There is a need for residential school for these children especially for their girls. Since the parents of these children are very poor and are forced to migrate very frequently to earn their living, the facility of residential schools will considerably increase the school enrolment and reduce the dropout rate. Residential schools for children of Denotified & Nomadic Communities have been very successful in Maharashtra. Though Govt of NCT of Delhi is running an Ashram School for these children but that is not enough considering the large population of these communities in the capital.



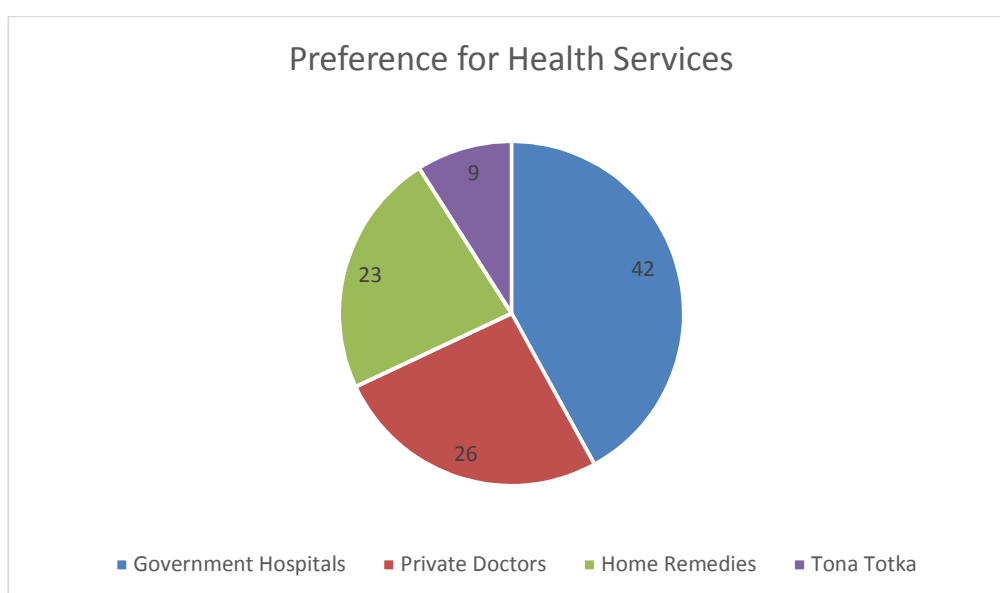
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## 9. Health Issues & Concerns

The data below shows that maximum number of people go to government hospitals for treatment. But since most of them are very poor and have to earn daily in order to survive, approaching government hospitals, which are usually very crowded is a time consuming proposition, and leads to considerable loss of income. This is a reason why many people have no option but to approach local untrained health service providers, who are usually quacks.

As the data in the table indicates that many people also have faith in home remedies. The area in which they live is also surrounded by quacks. A lot superstitions prevail in Denotified & Nomadic Communities, which are attached to various health disorders. Due to poverty and ignorance, many people in these communities still prefer treatment through black magic and tona totka. Therefore there is a need to create a health awareness among denotified and nomadic communities so that the communities begin taking excess to government health facilities.

**Figure-4**  
**Preference for Health Services**

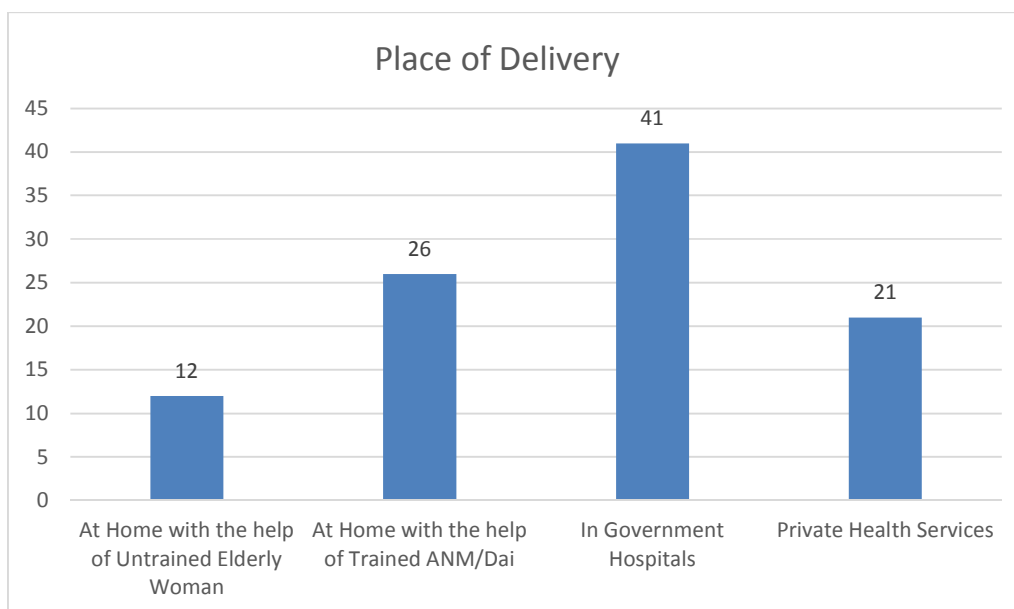


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### 9.1 Access to Maternity Services

Most of the deliveries take place at home with the help of untrained dais. More than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of services available at government hospitals. They are very crowded and there is fear of wage loss. Since most of the people are very poor, they can't afford private nursing homes which are very expensive to afford. Even during the time of deliveries, their men are often out of homes to earn their livelihood. The interviews with respondents also revealed that there was lack of awareness about ante-natal and post natal care. Besides poverty, ignorance is the main reason for these people not availing the benefits of govt. health facilities.

**Figure-5**  
**Place of Delivery**



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## 9.2 Age of Girls at Marriage

As the table below shows, the age of girls at marriage is quite low among denotified and nomadic communities as compared to other sections of society. Low age at marriage is a major health concern for girls and women. This was found to be lowest among Qalandars who are Muslims by religion. When asked, many of the women from these communities said that they prefer to marry off their girls as soon as they attain puberty. It was also low among Gadia Lohars and Nuts who mostly live and work in the open. They consider their women specially unmarried girls quite unsafe, and prefer to arrange their marriages as soon as possible. Age of girls at marriage was found to be better among Sansis and Rai Sikhs who were more educated and had their permanent houses.

**Table-5**  
**Age of Girls at Marriage**

Community	Average Age of Girls at Marriage
Qalandar	16
Gadia Lohar	17
Sapera	18
Nut	17
Bhat	20
Sanshi	22
Rai Sikh	21
Kanjar	18

## 9.3 High Level of Malnourishment

Women from Denotified & Nomadic Communities suffer from high level of malnourishment. One of the major reasons for this is poor food intake. This is quite obvious because women and children are worst sufferers among the communities who are economically backward and marginalized. This is also because most of these communities live in the most unhygienic conditions, which make them especially the

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women very vulnerable to a number of infections. They undertake most strenuous work within and outside their home without much scope for rest, entertainment or leisure. They also suffer due to poor access to health services.

#### **9.4 Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS**

Many social and anthropological studies conducted on these communities in the past have shown that some women of these community are forced into prostitution in the name of tradition or due to compulsion of economic deprivation, though women interviewed under this study vehemently denied and protested against this charge. Nevertheless, women who are engaged in this are most vulnerable to venereal diseases and HIV infection, and need to be protected.

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## 10. Livelihood Pattern

Majority of people from Denotified & Nomadic Communities want to earn their livelihood through their traditional occupations as the alternative sources of income for them are limited due to lack of resources and lack of skills.

The table below shows the major sources of livelihood of denotified and nomadic communities in Delhi. It also indicates that due to the increasing pressure of new realities and shrinking scope of their traditional occupations, they are forced to adopt to new and modern sources of earning.

**Table-6**  
**Major Source of Livelihood of Denotified/Nomadic Communities**

<b>Denotified Community</b>	<b>Major Source of Livelihood</b>
<b>Qalandar</b>	Street Magic Shows, Selling of Precious stones, Begging, labour
<b>Gadia Lohar</b>	Blacksmith
<b>Sapera</b>	Snake Charmers, Drum Beating at Marriages, Begging etc.
<b>Nut</b>	Acrobats, Selling flowers & Other items on the road
<b>Bhat</b>	Puppetry, Drum Beating at Marriages, Folk Dance Groups
<b>Sanshi</b>	Labour, Selling Liquor
<b>Rai Sikh</b>	Agriculture, labour
<b>Kanjar</b>	Begging, Street Singing, Bartering utensils with old cloths

As the table below shows that most of these communities are finding it difficult to make use of their traditional skills. It also reflects that some of the communities are still engaged in their traditional occupations despite being conflict with many laws, whereas many of them have shifted to new occupations.

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**Table-7**  
**Communities following Traditional Occupations**

Following Traditional Occupation	Gadia Lohar	Nat		
Partially Following Traditional Occupation	Kanjar	Qalander	Bhat	Sapera
Completely Shifted to New Occupation	Sansi	Rai Sikh		

Qalanders are still engaged in their traditional occupation of holding street shows of monkeys. Some of them hold magic shows. Earlier many of them had bears too. But due the enactment of ‘Wildlife Protection Act’ and ‘*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*’, they are not allowed now to keep bears and hold their shows. Some of them have begun selling precious stones. Even for this they are forced to pay bribe to police. Otherwise they are picked up under the Prevention of Begging Act and sent to beggars home. Same is the story of Nats, who also perform acrobatic shows on the streets.

Bhats, who mainly live in Kathputli Colony near Shadipur Depot are traditionally skilled puppeteers. Many of them have performed even in International festivals, the pictures of which they show very proudly. But apart from public appreciation, it has not brought about any change in their standard of living. Says one of the respondents, “What is use of such art which can’t help your family eat properly. I have visited many countries and performed with a number of internationally acclaimed artists. But we come back home to live in the same slum full of filth and get busy in our continued fight for survival.”

No matter how difficult the work is, and how low the income, Gadia Lohars have been pursuing their century old business as blacksmith. They are usually engaged in making and repairing agricultural and household implements. They lead a hard life despite the adverse weather and the uncertainties of their trade. But with the change of time, new

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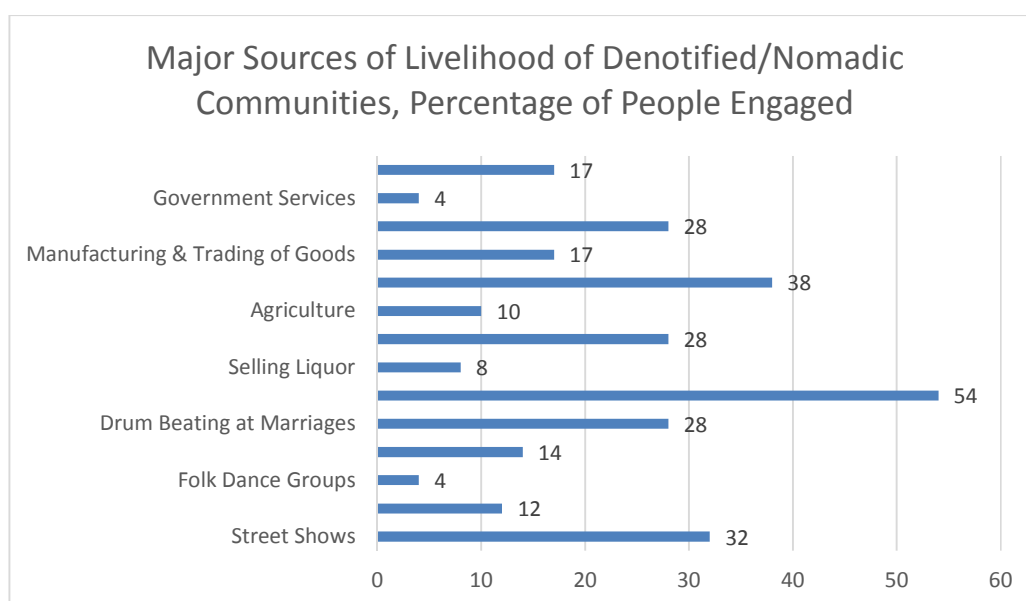
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cheap and modern tools are now available in the market, which reduced the demand for tools of Gadia Lohars.

Kanjars are the poorest of all the Denotified & Nomadic Communities in Delhi. Majority of them are either in begging or earn their livelihood working as rag pickers. Some families exchange utensils with old clothes. Women from Kanjar community have traditionally been engaged in prostitution but this is vehemently denied by them.

Sansis have the largest population of Denotified & Denotified Communities surveyed under this study. They are mainly concentrated in Majnu Ka Tila, Andha Mughal, Mangolpuri and Kasturba Nagar. Sansis are traditionally known for illegally selling liquors. But their young generation is giving it up and wants to live their lives with hardwork and dignity. Some of them are now engaged in all types of works such as casual labour, running small shops, driving autos and working as agents at transport authorities.

**Figure-6**  
**Major Sources of Livelihood of Denotified/Nomadic Communities**



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The traditional occupation of Saperas has been performing snake shows. They are very expert in catching even the most poisonous snakes. People usually call them to catch snakes, and remove the poison from persons bitten by snakes. But they can't legally do that now under the new laws. This has deprived them of their traditional livelihood. Majority of them now earn their living by beating drums at marriages and other functions. Their major settlements in Delhi are Ghadoli and Molar Band villages.

Rai Sikh are mainly engaged in agriculture. They are thought to be very laborious cultivators. Some of them still illegally sell liquors. Rai Sikh community covered under this survey is living in Jaitpur village near Badarpur. After partition, they were settled here by giving land to cultivate. But most of their land was acquired for Badarpur Power Plant. Many of them now work as agricultural labourers.



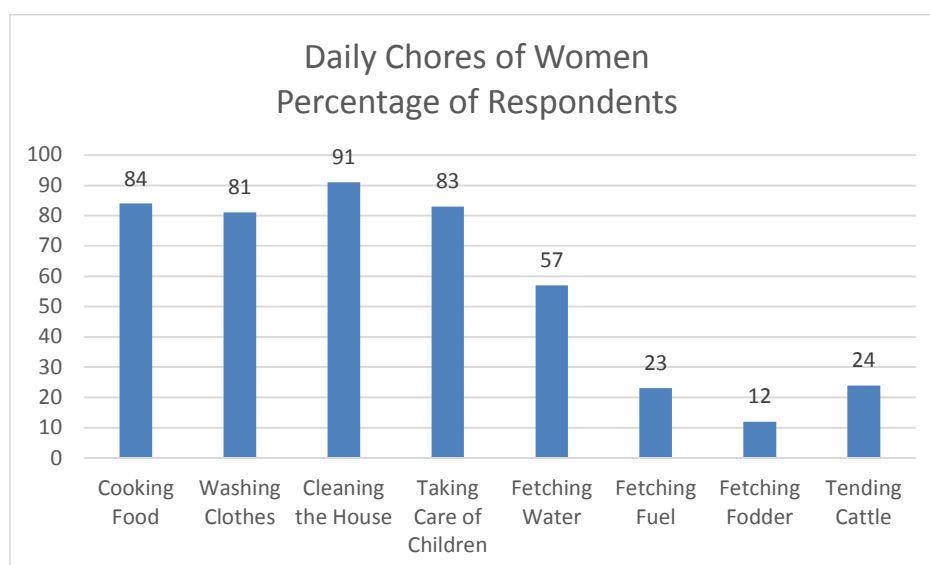
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#### 11. Daily Chores of Women

The data shown below indicates that most of the women of Denotified and Nomadic Communities take care of various responsibilities such as cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning house, taking care of children etc. Women from these communities are very hard working. A large number of them go out to earn as well as take care of household activities. Fetching water is also a major responsibility of women.

**Figure-7**  
**Daily Chores of Women**



Tending cattle, fetching fuel and fodder as daily chores of women were more reported among Saperas and Rai Sikhs who live in urban villages and keep livestock.

##### 11.1 Women in Income Generating Activities

Most of the women, we talked to, were willing to work and earn some supplementary income for their families. They have a liking for knitting, stitching, embroidery, making mud toys, handicrafts and other decorative articles. But they need some training and resources to begin their own small enterprises.

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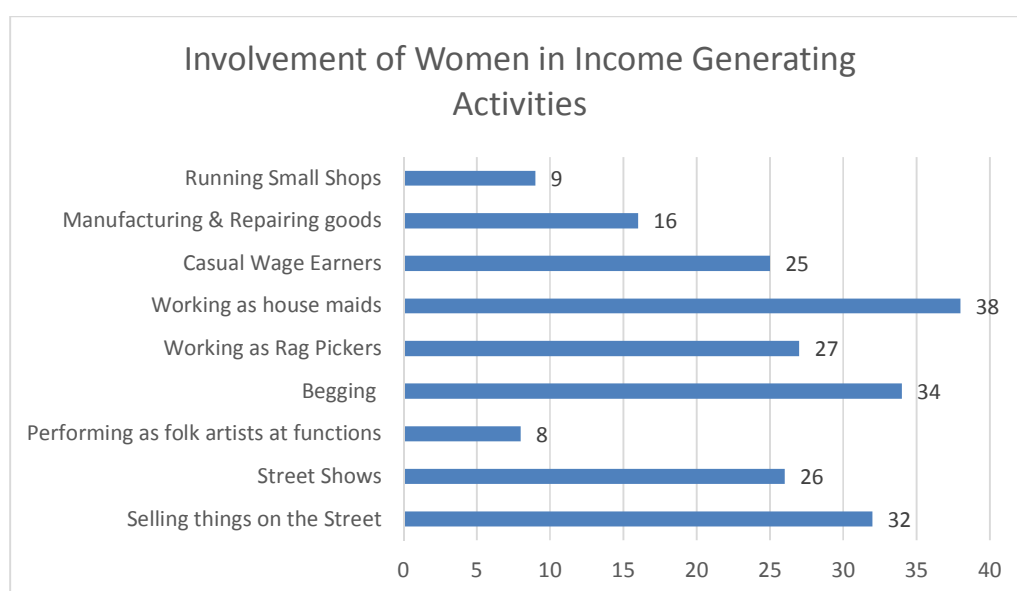
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Begging is common among denotified and nomadic communities. When there is nothing else to do, they especially women and children just go for begging. But begging, as they say, is full of hazards. Sometimes they are caught begging by the police under the Prevention of Begging Act, and taken to remand homes. Young girls begging on streets face sexual harassment by goons roaming around.

Some of the women especially from Kanjars are in prostitution. But when asked about this they deny and protest. But it is evident that some of these communities might have practiced it long time ago, but none of them wants to do it by choice now.

Some of the women and girls also work as rag pickers. Many of them can be seen roaming in the streets with polythene bags on their shoulders for collecting waste like paper, plastic, tins and bottles. Many of them suffer from skin diseases and other ailments as they are continuously in contact with garbage.

**Figure-8**  
**Involvement of Women in Income Generating Activities**



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Occupational profile of women vary significantly from community to community. In Kanjars, Nat and Gadia Lohar communities, women are almost equal partners in income generating activities. They are very hard working and laborious. They earn as well as take care of household responsibilities such as cooking, washing clothes and cleaning the house, and caring for children. Women among Qalanders and Rai Sikhs mainly remain inside their homes. Men don't like their women to work outside. But still some women from Qalander community work as rag pickers. Many Sansi women from Majnu Ka Tila sell paper made tri colours alongside the roads or in buses. Some of them sell liquors and also go for begging. Women and girls from Nat community take active part in holding street acrobatic shows. Recently some of them have also begun selling flowers and other small items on the street.

As far as employment for women was concerned, most of the women, we talked to were willing to learn new skills and work to earn extra income for the family. They have a liking for knitting, stitching, embroidery, stuffed toys and handicrafts. But lack of capital and marketing skills is a major handicap. Besides, women also take keen interest in animal husbandry. If given enough incentives and loans on low interest, it can generate extra income and supplement the diet of the family members.

Almost all families belonging to these communities are very poor, and live just hand to mouth. Even survival is a constant struggle for them with their daily earnings being very low and hardly enough to sustain the entire family.

### **11.2 Impact of Various Legislations on Livelihood**

Various laws passed by State and Central Government since independence, have adversely affected the livelihood opportunities of Denotified & Nomadic Communities. In 1952, Criminal Tribes Act was repealed and around 150 communities were denotified. But unfortunately soon after that many state governments passes ‘Habitual Offenders Act’ a similar act, which not only stigmatized them again but

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curtailed their freedom. A number of communities which traditionally have been earning their livelihood by holding street shows are harassed and frequently booked under ‘Prevention of Begging Act’, 1959. Likewise, many communities such as Qalanders and Saperas were deprived of their livelihood by ‘Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960’, without any alternative source of earning or relief offered.

When asked, one of the woman from Sapera community said,

‘We have been performing street shows with snakes for centuries. This has been our ancestral profession. We never harm snakes, we rather treat them as one of our family members. We even gift them as a part of dowry. But keeping snakes has been banned now. It was wrong and will not protect environment. The government should have provided us some alternative source of livelihood before this ban. How can you deprive people from their livelihood? Right to livelihood is before all other rights. This is our fundamental right. Now snake charmers including their women are forced to beg on the streets. What kind of justice is this?, she asked.

The same is the story of a woman from Qalandar community. One woman from Qalandar community narrates her ordeals such as below.

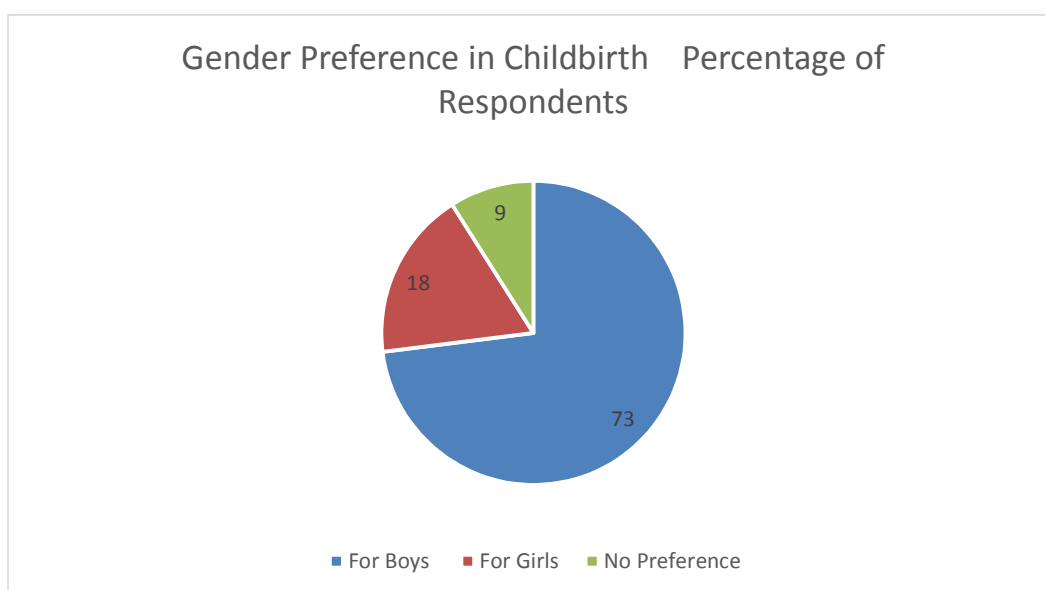
*‘My name is Shakeela. (Name Changed). I am 20 years old. I got married at the age of 14 years. My husband holds monkey shows. But police in Delhi doesn’t allow us to continue our traditional occupation. They ask us for bribe and beat us up if we refuse to pay. My husband had no option but to leave the city and migrate to Shimla, where there are less restrictions on this. I have given birth to a baby who is 13 days old. My husband is not around. I don’t know where he is. He may not be even knowing about my condition. I have no body around to take care of me. There is hardly anything to eat in the house. We have been holding monkey’s shows for centuries. We have been rendered without livelihood. Don’t I have the right to live with my husband even if I am pregnant?’*

## 12. Gender Equality & Human Rights

### 12.1 Gender Discrimination in relation to Births & Health Services

Survey data shows preference of boys against girls in matters of childbirth. When asked this question, 73 percent of the respondents showed their preference for boys. There was a marked discrimination against women & girls in matters of providing health services also. It was a common perception that since women are to stay at home, they will get well with time on their own. Many of them held the view that nature has made a woman's body tough to fight a disease.

**Figure-9**  
**Gender Preference for Childbirth**

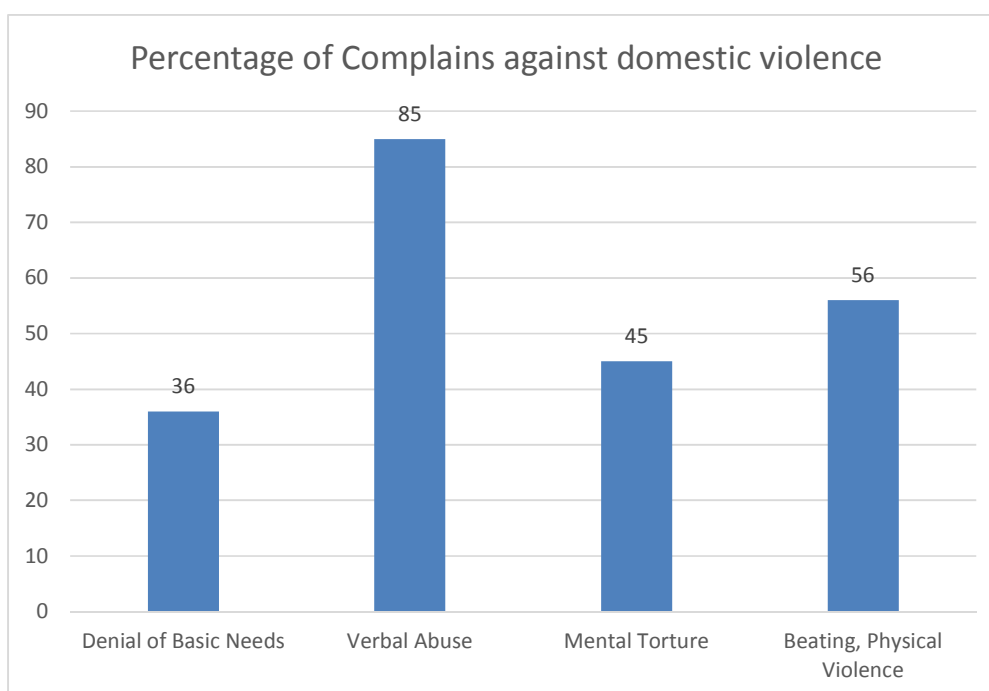


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## 12.2 Domestic Violence

These women are not only the victims of neglect and exploitation by people from outside community, but also suffer tremendous pain and agony inflicted by their own people within the family. The life of a nomad is very hard and difficult surrounded by circumstances full of trauma, agony and turbulence, from which their women suffer the most. Drinking is in common use in most of the denotified and nomadic communities. This has been an integral part of their food habits for centuries. Incidents of domestic violence were reported by many women inflicted mostly by their husbands under the influence of alcohol. Women bear all this in silence as it is considered the fundamental right of a husband to beat his wife. These cases are mostly not reported. The cases of domestic violence were reported more from Qalander and Sansi communities.

**Figure-10**  
**Complains against Domestic Violence**



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The status of women in Denotified and Nomadic communities varies. Women who are actively engaged in income generating activities such as in Gadia Lohars, Nats, Kanjars and Sansi enjoy more freedom compared to those from Qalanders, Saperas and Rai Sikhs. Many of these communities have been traditionally engaged or forced into various petty crimes such as pickpocketing, theft, sale of illicit liquor etc. Women and children often see their houses being visited by police, beating their family members and booking them for under various laws.

#### **12.3 Virginty Test**

The virginty test, centuries-old custom also known as *Kukari ki Rasam* is practiced among Sansis. Women under this custom are forced to face virginty test on the first night of their marriage, which is not only cruel and insulting but a violation of their womanhood. During the interviews, it was revealed by some women that majority of Sansi families living in Delhi are more educated and sensitized towards women don't practice this tradition now, but in some cases it is still used to settle family disputes.

#### **12.4. Sexual Harassment faced by Women**

Women and girls among these communities feel very unsafe and vulnerable as they often face sexual harassment by members of other communities. The most sufferers among them are women from Gadia Lohars and Nats who live in small J J lusters and have to go out either to sell their products or hold their shows.

Sunita (Name Changed) is 17 years old and is from Nat community. Her family originally belongs to Chhatisgarh. She accompanies her mother and younger brother to hold acrobatic shows. She says 'By our dress and behaviour, we look different. Many people make dirty jokes and gestures. Others try to take undue advantage and seek sexual favours. We keep mum and avoid such situations. We don't dare to report these cases to any one as we know that it will be inviting further harassment and

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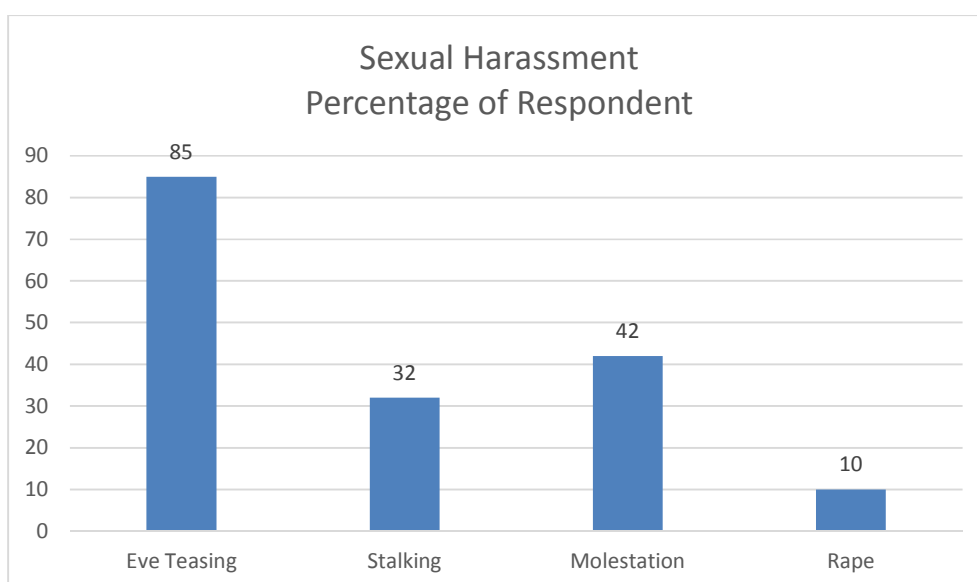
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trouble. We are very poor. We have to earn every day to earn our living. Where do we have the time to visit police station and courts? This happens almost every day.”

Munni, (Name Changed) who is 26 years old, lives in Sansi settlement at Majnu Ka Tila. She has four children to feed. Her husband only drinks and stays at home. She is the only bread earner in the family. She sometimes begs and sometimes sells paper made flags in buses and alongside roads also makes similar complains. This is how she narrated her story.

*“I face molestation every day. What can I do? I have no other choice. My family is very poor. My husband drinks, does nothing and stays at home. I can’t see my children hungry. I have to earn for my family. Working on the street is extremely difficult. People make all types of offensive comments, and try to take liberty. If I complain or protest, nobody comes to my rescue. People think we are women of easy virtues. Some of the girls who come from very poor families, fall prey to greed and monetary inducement. But I don’t blame them”*

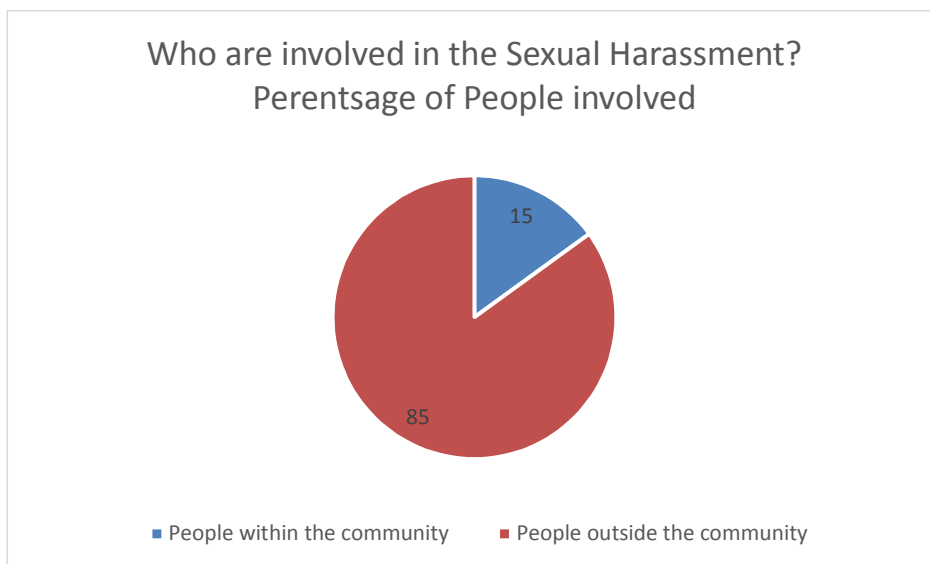
**Figure-11**  
**Cases of Sexual Harassment**





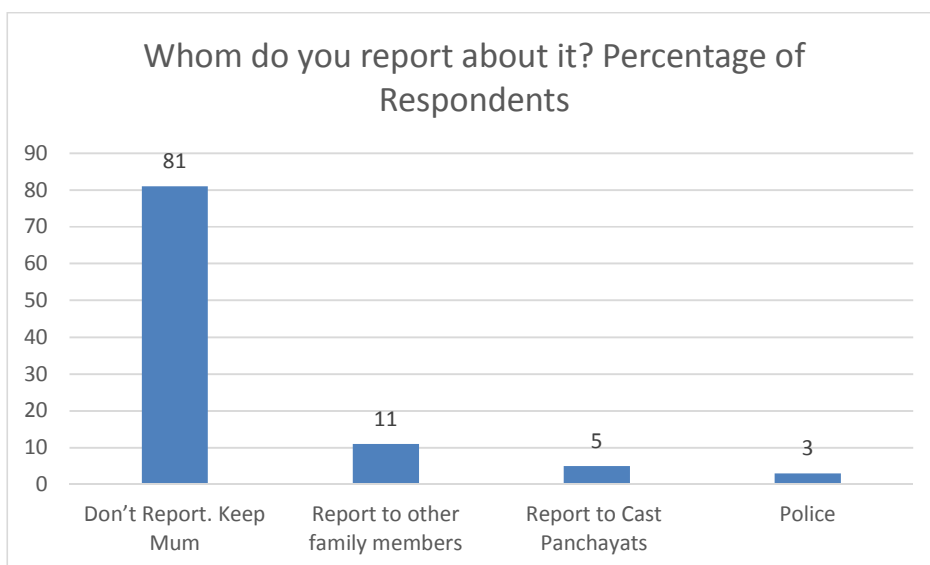
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**Figure-12**  
**Who are involved in the Sexual Harassment?**



The figure above shows that in the most of the cases of sexual harassment, people from outside community are found to be involved. It was also evident that from the data shown below that in 81 percent cases are not reported.

**Figure-13**  
**Whom do you report about it?**



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### **12.5 Women forced into Prostitution**

No evidence of cast prostitution was found in the Denotified & Nomadic communities surveyed under this study in Delhi. Some of the women from this section of society may be involved in the prostitution due to poverty or other reasons but this can't be generalized or for this the entire community can't be blamed. Unfortunately other communities hold a very negative and biased opinion about these people especially about their women due to the stigma of criminality being carried by these communities for centuries. This is also due to the lack of inter community interaction.

### **12.6 Human Rights Violations & Police Atrocities**

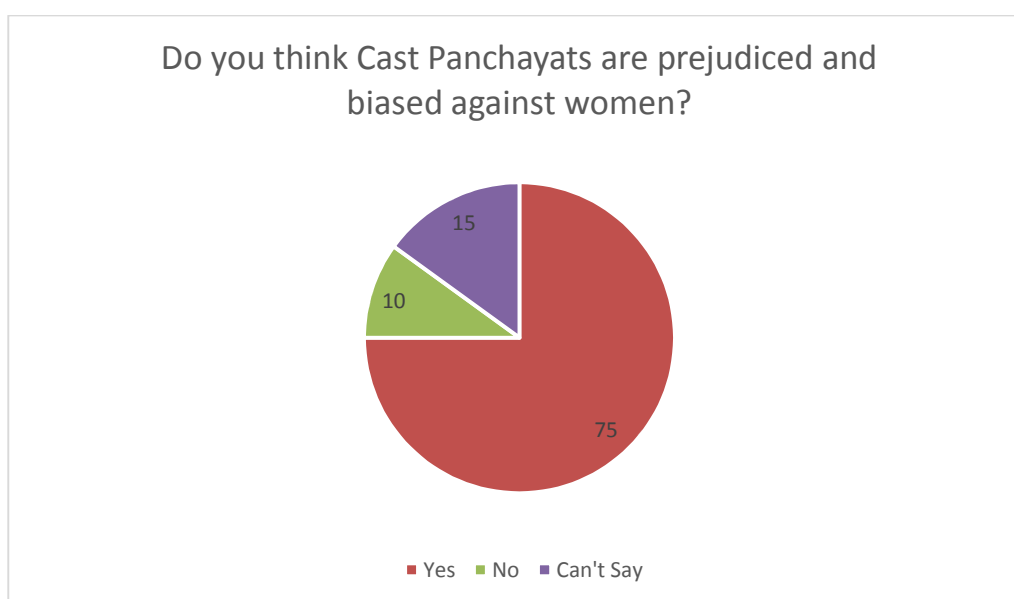
These communities are victims of social stigma and prejudice for centuries. The mainstream society is still not ready to accept them as equals. They are still perceived as criminals. The communities complain of police being highly biased against them. Some of the respondents from Sansi and Rai Sikh communities said that there have been many cases of members of these communities falsely implicated by police.

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### 13. Role of Caste Panchayats & Women

Most of the Denotified and Nomadic communities have their own cast Panchayats. These cast Panchayats are called to settle disputes mainly related to matrimony, marital discords and property disputes. Caste Panchayats among denotified communities are men dominated. The representation as well as participation of women in these panchayats are either almost negligible or very low. Though the caste Panchayats are gradually losing their authority but they are still accessed by people because getting justice from judicial system is expensive and time taking. It was reported by many women during the interviews that in most of the cases, Caste Panchayats are biased against women, and give judgments, which are not only unjust and but fail to protect their rights. In many cases, women are not even given opportunity to be present and offer their arguments. Thus there is a need to create an awareness in the community especially among the members of their cast panchayats about gender equality so that the rights of these women could be protected

**Figure-14**  
**Cast Panchayats prejudiced against women**



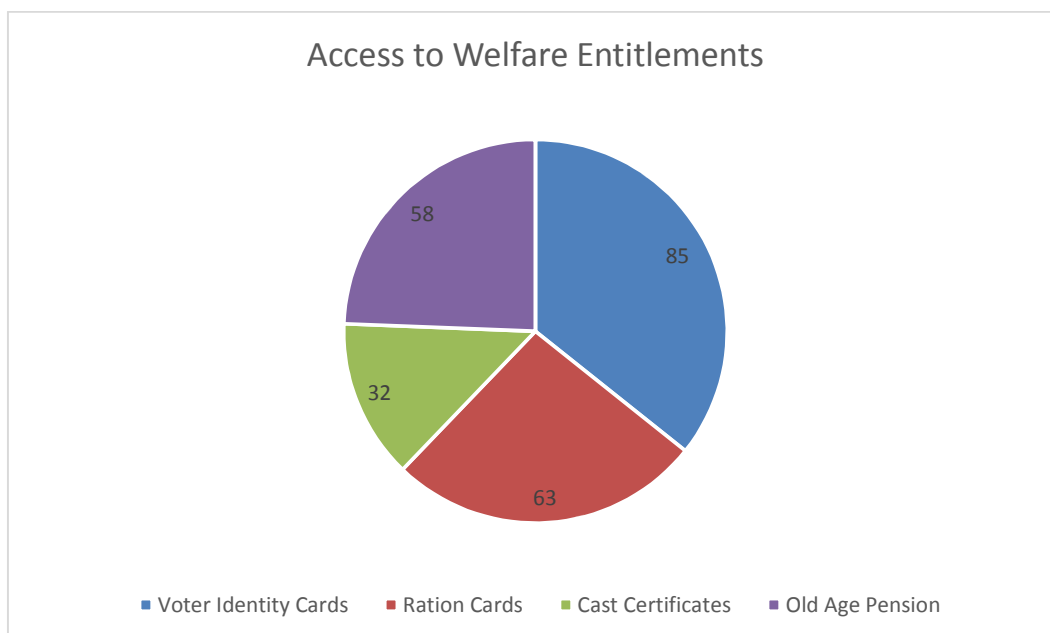
## 14. Access to Welfare Entitlements

The Constitution of India has given these communities various rights including the reservation under SC, ST and OBC categories. Most of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in India are classified into various categories of Scheduled Casts, Schedules Tribes and OBCs. Government of India has also been running a number of welfare programmes and schemes for the development of this section of Indian community which is the most backward and marginalized social group.

### 14.1 Voter Identity Cards

85 percent of total respondents surveyed reported having voter identity cards. It was found that local politicians take very keen interest that the maximum number of people in their constituencies are issued voter identity cards. During the survey it was found that most of the people of these communities also exercise their right to vote.

**Figure-15**  
**Access to Welfare Entitlements**



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#### 14.2 Ration Cards

Of all the households surveyed it was found that 63 of them were in possession of ration cards. But many of them complained that often the quantity of ration is not good or not given as per the rules. Its supply also gets discontinued on one or the other pretext. It was also reported by some of the respondents that local authorities either refuse or remain reluctant in issuing them ration cards under BPL category as per their entitlement.

#### 14.3 Cast Certificates

The data shows that only 32 per cent households among denotified & nomadic communities had cast certificates. Getting cast certificates is the biggest problem, these communities face. Cast certificate is very important for a person of these communities to be eligible for reservation and getting other welfare entitlements. The biggest hurdle in the way of getting cast certificate for these communities is the problem of proving one's identity. Due to their being nomadic in the past they are known by different names and listed in different casts in different states, which has caused a lot of confusion with regard to their real identity. Solution of this problem requires suitable changes in the policy at the highest level and interstate coordination.

**Table-8**  
**Awareness about Cast Categorization as SC/ST/OBC**

<b>Awareness about Cast Categorization</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
I know	62
I don't know	38

The data above shows that only 62 percent of the respondents knew exactly about which cast category they belong to. Thus these highly marginalized communities are

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suffering from a sense of identity crisis, which makes it even more difficult for them to avail any of the welfare benefits.

#### **14.4 Benefit of Reservation to Denotified & Nomadic Communities**

Reservation doesn't seem to have benefited these communities as desired. First and foremost, the level of education among them is very low. But even those who are educated upto a certain level find it difficult to get suitable government jobs. This has made many of them very disappointed. Some of them even raised the question about the relevance of the education. Prakash Nath Sapera says;

‘What is the use of sending the children to schools when they fail to get any job? It is even more difficult for girls. Those, who are powerful and access to resources grab most of the opportunities. Even the graduate here earns his livelihood by beating the drums at marriage parties.’

Thus, what is required is to provide free coaching to children especially the girls of these communities so as to make them able to compete with other communities for various exams.

#### **14.5 Welfare Measures, Development Programmes & Schemes**

##### **Welfare Programmes by Govt. of NCT**

Govt. of NCT of Delhi has been running a residential school under the Scheme for Sanskar Ashram which is aimed at providing free schooling with residence facilities to the children of Denotified & Nomadic communities in Delhi. But unfortunately due awareness about this school has not been created as a result of which, most of DNT communities have no idea about this programme, and the benefit of this residential school is taken by other communities.

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It has also been providing vocational training in cutting tailoring, crafts, embroidery, food and nutrition to women & girls of these communities. Some commercial sheds have also been constructed by the state government under its Scheme for Economic Rehabilitation of Denotified Tribes-Allotment of Industrial Sheds’. The children of these communities are also getting the benefits given to children of scheduled caste and OBCs in schools.

#### **Haryana Housing Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Denotified Tribes**

In Haryana, “Housing scheme for Scheduled Castes and Denotified Tribes, Dr B.R Ambedkar” is being implemented to solve the housing problem of Scheduled Castes and Denotified Tribes/ Tapriwas Jatis. From the year 2006, amount has been enhanced from Rs 10,000 to Rs. 50,000 and a provision of Rs. 10,000 is also made for repair of the house. Since the inception of present government is a remarkable growth in this scheme as expenditure increase from 70.50 lacs to 1800.00 lacs and beneficiaries from 705 to 7868 in the year 2009-10. Rs. 30.36 Cr. have been spent on 7,868 houseless persons in the year 2009-10 to construct or repair their dwelling.

National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic & Semi Nomadic Tribes headed by Shri Balkrishna Renke provides following information about various welfare measures, development programmes/Schemes for these communities.

Government of Andhra Pradesh constituted a Backward Classes Finance Corporation in 1974 to implement various schemes for the socio-economic development of Backward Classes in the State which included the Denotified Communities.

Government of Madhya Pradesh established the Madhya Pradesh Rajya Vimukt, Ghumakkad and Ardh Gumakkad Jati Vikas Abhikaran in 1996. Through this authority, various self-employment programmes and basic infrastructural development works are being implemented for the Denotified and Nomadic peoples in the State. For

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the question on details of Finance and Development Corporation set up by the State for the development of Denotified and Nomadic peoples, the Government of Madhya Pradesh responded that no such Finance and Development Corporation has been set up in Madhya Pradesh for DNT-NT and SNTs. If these communities are included in SCs and OBCs, they get loans and subsidies from Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation and Other Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation, as per the provisions in the schemes.

Government of Maharashtra has been implementing a number of schemes for the welfare of VJNTs, Socially Backward Classes (SBCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the State. It has also made category-wise reservation for candidates belonging to VJNTs, SBCs and OBCs, for educational and service purposes. Almost all the castes and sub-castes of the VJNTs, SBCs and OBCs in the State are included in the Central list of the Other Backward Classes, as per the Mandal Commission Report.

The welfare programmes run by the government are as follows;

- 1) Grant-in Aid to Ashramshalas run by voluntary organization for VJNT boys and Girls (98400 beneficiaries for the year 2006-2007 in 525 primary and 295 secondary schools)
- 2) Government of India Post-Matric Scholarship
- 3) Award of Scholarship to Backward class students meritorious in secondary schools (for Mumbai)
- 4) Award of stipend to Backward Class students studying in Industrial Training Institutes
- 5) Tuition fees and Examination Fees to VJNT, SBC and OBC students
- 6) Maintenance allowance to Backward Class students under training at Sainik Schools



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- 7) Payment of maintenance allowances to VJNT students studying in Professional Courses and studying in hostels allotted to Professional Colleges
- 8) Post-Matric Scholarships to SBC and OBC students
- 9) Award of stipend to VJNT and SBC students studying in ITIs
- 10) Rajashri Chaatrapati Shahu Maharaj merit Scholarship
- 11) Savitribai Phule Scholarship for VJNT and SBC girls
- 12) Public Schools for Vimukta jatis and Nomadic Tribes, and so on.

Other development schemes of the Government of Maharashtra include Tanda/Vasti Development Scheme, housing loan and subsidy to Backward Class Co-Operative Housing Societies, Subsidy schemes and training programmes of the Vasantaro Naik Vimukta Jatis and Nomadic Tribes Development Corporation Ltd.

In Rajasthan, out of 602 hostels run for students studying up to senior secondary class, 30 hostels are being run exclusively for the students from Denotified and Nomadic in the State, besides providing pre-matric and post-matric scholarships. For the socio-economic development of Gadia Lohars, the Rajasthan Government has been implementing a Special Integrated Scheme for house-cum-shop for Gadia Lohars, along with another financial support scheme to purchase raw material for manufacturing equipments and tools for agricultural and industrial purposes.

In Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Economic Development Corporation has been providing loans to individuals, groups and societies belonging to the Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities (MBCs and DNCs) at subsidized rates for economically and financially viable schemes/trade/project. Various job oriented training programmes are also provided to the MBCs/DNCs to enable them to secure jobs.

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Besides pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, free education scholarships are also granted to the MBC and DNC students studying in degree, polytechnic and professional courses. Out of 973 government hostels run by the State Government for the BC/MBC students, 132 hostels are run exclusively for the DNC students. For the educational advancement of the Paramalai Kallar community, a numerically dominant DNC, the Tamil Nadu Government runs 260 Kallar Reclamation Schools and 48 hostels with an attendance of 48898 students. Free house site pattas were also given to the MBCs and DNCs in Tamil Nadu.

#### **15. Role of Voluntary Organizations**

Very few voluntary organizations work for Denotified and Nomadic Communities in Delhi. The reasons for this are many. First of all, many of these communities don't wish to open up to the outsiders as they feel threatened due to the exploitation, they have been exposed to in the past. They don't seem to have much faith in people outside their community. Many of these communities like to be left alone. Besides, there are lack of welfare schemes specifically targeting these communities. Even foreign funding agencies are less inclined to support NGOs working for Denotified & Nomadic Communities because they feel it difficult to monitor the services provided or the impact of the project due to the nomadic nature of these communities.

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## **16. Conclusions**

Women of Denotified & Nomadic communities are very hard working and courageous. They undertake the maximum burden of the household. They go long distance to collect water and firewood. They take care of livestock and other household responsibilities. Gadia Lohar women play major part in the household profession of blacksmith. Nat women and girls actively take part in street shows. Therefore, it can be said that women are the backbone of denotified and nomadic communities.

But it is women only who suffer the most pain and agony. The level of education of girls among these communities is very low. There is gender bias against them when it comes to sending children to schools. Many of those who go to schools, are forced to dropout as soon as they attain puberty, or because there are no separate schools for girls, or there is a case of sexual harassment.

Women of these communities live under the most horrible conditions. They face humiliation due to the stigma, the community suffers from. They are also looked down upon by people of other communities. The social neglect, discrimination and prejudiced attitude of mainstream society make them the most marginalized in society. They have minimum opportunities to enjoy as her work household involves too much of burden and drudgery.

Since these communities want to maintain their distinct cultural identities and refuse to be a part of the mainstream society, their problems need to be viewed and addressed in a different social context. There is also a need for a focused intervention in dealing with the problems of women of these communities, as a general approach and policy of development for all communities may not prove very helpful.

The situation is changing very fast as women of these communities are more aware now, and are beginning to fight for their rights. The community can also play an important role in bringing about a positive change in the attitude of people toward their women & girls.

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## **17. Recommendations**

### **17.1 Recommendations for Central Government**

1. Ministry of Culture can launch a new scheme to document, protect and preserve the rich cultural heritage of Denotified & Nomadic Communities.
2. Ministry of MSME, HRD and Social Justice & Empowerment can launch special income generation schemes for women of these communities.
3. Government should launch special schemes for providing long term loans at very low interest with subsidy to these people for building their houses as most of them are homeless for centuries, and this is one of the major problems of these communities.
4. Women from these communities are very hardworking and skilful in various types of handicraft and artisanship. For example, women from Gadia Lohar & Saperas make excellent embroidery work, which is also in good demand. Therefore Ministry of Textile and Ministry of Skill Development may have some special schemes for women of these communities for developing their traditional skills for handicraft.
5. Various government sponsored agencies such as KVIC should be encouraged to buy various kinds of products from women of nomadic tribes on concessional rates.
6. There are many puppeteers, acrobats and street magicians among them. But unfortunately due to the onslaught of modernity, most of these arts are on decline. State Governments have put many restrictions upon them to hold street shows. They are booked under 'Prevention of Begging Act' and treated as beggars. Therefore Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to make

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necessary amendments in these laws if needed and allow the folk artists from these communities to hold street shows and promote their cultural heritage.

7. These communities especially the women have kept alive the rich art and culture of this country from centuries. Many nomadic tribes such as Qalanders, Bhats, Saperas have rich cultural heritage which needs to be preserved. Ministry of Culture can launch a special scheme for the promotion of art and culture of denotified and nomadic communities.
8. Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Culture should hold festival at state and national level to showcase the rich art and culture of India's nomads which will help attract foreign tourists and will provide sustainable source of livelihood to these communities.
9. National Sample Survey Organization should collect community and cast based information on vital issues such as health & nutrition, level of education, habitat, Livelihood patterns, access to basic services, and other gender issues.
10. Owning a house remains a dream for wandering communities. Government should launch special schemes for providing long term loans at very low interest with subsidy for housing to be owned by women of these communities, as most of them are homeless from centuries, and this is one of the major problems of these communities.
11. Since these communities are stigmatized from centuries, they are often ill-treated and are victims of police atrocities. Many women, for instance, are forced to leave their homes for a certain duration especially during festivals such as Holi and Dewali, which is known as Zilabadar, and is an inhuman practice. National Commission for Women and National Human Rights Commission should take stern action against such cases of atrocities. Police should also be sensitized for this.

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## **17.2 Recommendations for State Government**

1. Most of the nomadic communities live in small settlements outside the cities and towns, and therefore don't have access to health care facilities. Therefore health departments of state governments should launch mobile health care units for providing pre and post natal care for pregnant women of nomadic communities.
2. Most of the deliveries among these women take place at home, that too with the help of untrained dais resulting in large number of maternal mortality. Thus there is a need to ensure safe institutionalized deliveries among these communities by health departments of state and central government.
3. A large number of girls from these communities dropout of school very early because their families are forced to migrate very frequently from one place to another. Therefore Special Residential Schools should be setup to provide free and quality education to girls of these communities.
4. There should be awareness campaigns to educate these communities to protect their women and girls against sexual abuse and trafficking in the name of tradition.
5. Community based special initiatives should be launched under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to bring back out of school girls who are forced into begging.
6. Very little information is available about the lifestyle and problems of these communities, which makes it difficult for policy makers to have an objective assessment about their population and other issues for the purpose of preparing schemes. Therefore it is necessary for State Governments to sponsor research studies with focus on women and girls of these communities to get more authentic information from grass root level. The government should also sponsor schemes to document the language, literacy and culture of nomadic communities.

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7. Since women of Denotified Tribes are victims of violence and abuse, and police and society in large are prejudiced against them, they should be sensitized towards this section of society.
8. Government and private sector should initiate skill development programmes for women of denotified and nomadic communities through various employable vocations training projects.
9. There should be separate department for the study of Denotified & Nomadic Communities in the state, so that their problems could be understood and studied in a more scientific way.
10. Due to the nature of the pattern of their livelihood, many of these communities don't have access to the welfare schemes as many of them don't have cast certificates. The local authorities refuse them cast certificates because they are known as different castes in different states. Such as Sansi are known as Chhara in Gujrat and Kanjar Bhat in Maharshttra. Qalandars are known as Bazigars and Faqir in UP and Rajasthan. Thus there is a need to have a better coordination among various state governments to fill in this gap, which remains a major hurdle for these communities to avail the benefits of most the welfare schemes of central and state governments.

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### Annexure-1

#### **Reneke Commission Report on Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes**

#### **Chapter 12, Gender Issues**

An important aspect of inequality in human society is the gender. Since majority of societies in the world happen to be patrilineal and male-dominated, women among them are denied several rights, and are discriminated. Not only that, even in matrilineal societies, which can be counted on finger tips, women suffer from several social, cultural, and economic handicaps. Though women all over the world are victims of discrimination, their condition is immeasurably bad and pitiable in Denotified and Nomadic tribes. Their vulnerability to exploitation is particularly high because of the precarious condition of their communities, which are poor and socially excluded. Their poverty has increased exponentially with a decline in their traditional occupations, destruction of their natural habitats, and absence of opportunities for gainful employment. Not having the rights of citizenship in many cases, such as the power to vote, they are not the favourites of politicians, who may come to their rescue whenever the need arises. Devoid of modern leadership, which may provide them with spokespersons and ‘intermediaries’ between the state and the people, they are unable to make their representations to the government and fight for their legitimate rights.

In a nutshell, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes women are subject to exploitation, suppression, and oppression. It is well known that sufferings of poor women are several times more than that of rich women. Since women from the denotified and Nomadic communities are the victims of ‘cumulative inequality’, they deserve immediate policy intervention.

In addition to taking a serious note of the cases of atrocities against women from Denotified and Nomadic communities reported in the media, the Commission also carried out many in situ enquiries on the state of women among them. One of its important conclusions is that threat to the safety and dignity of women in Denotified and Nomadic communities is significantly larger than it is in other societies. We may present below a few cases that substantiate this point.

The Hindi newspaper, Amar Ujala, of 3 May 2008 carried a report about a petition that a nomadic community of Parisar Tehsil, Banda District (Uttar Pradesh), submitted to the administration. It said that criminals and anti-social elements of the area sexually assaulted their women, for, being homeless, they resided in open grounds, and were most irresistible to their prying eyes and attacks. The petition also alleged that the administration was totally indifferent to their problems. In another case, the Commission also learnt from an NGO official about a girl (whose family’s shelter was under a tree) from Rajasthan, who was forcibly carried away by a group of miscreants

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on a motorcycle, and was dumped at the place from where she was picked up the following day. Sensing the vengeful attitude of the wrongdoers, who hailed from dominant sections of the community, her family did not approach the police with a complaint. However, the NGO intervened and the case was brought to the knowledge of the administration, but as the victim did not belong to the SC/ST category, she was not entitled to any relief.

A large number of cases of this type may be collected from literature. The Commission also received representations from these communities as well as from the representatives of the NGOs who appraised it of the cases at the local level where women were especially targeted for sexual attacks, in certain cases for avenging the actions of some male members of the Denotified and Nomadic community. Women were singled out to ‘teach a lesson to the community as a whole.’ The saddest part was that in many cases neither did the administration take note of these happenings nor did the police register the case.

An NGO working with Denotified and Nomadic communities visited the Commission and requested its presence at a public hearing which it had initiated on the issue of suicide that a fifteen year old girl from a Denotified community had committed because of beatings and harassment at the hands of police in the city of Bhopal. In this meeting, a number of women and children narrated their experiences of police atrocities on them. They said that they were invariably rounded up for petty thefts, confined to police stations, beaten and tortured, and released after their families succeeded in bribing the police. An absence of both policewomen and juvenile courts was noted for dealing with cases where the victims of oppression were women and children. An important fact that the Commission learnt was that the law-enforcing agencies were under severe pressure from middle and upper classes to book rag-pickers, and deal with them sternly, for they thought that ‘today’s rag-pickers would be tomorrow’s hardened criminals.’ It is appalling to note that educated people still cling to the discarded theories of criminology that people from marginal and tertiary occupations (such as rag-picking) are bound to take crime as a future career.

The Commission also found that when a community lost its livelihood – say because of new laws for environmental protection and wildlife (like the Wildlife Protection Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), thus driving the people out of their traditional habitats and occupations – its women had a larger probability of entering into the flesh trade to eke out subsistence for their families and children. According to the 2003 Report of the Indian Centre for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ICITP), thousands of women in the midst of economic and sexual exploitation in towns and cities came from tribes (of hunter-gatherers) that were ousted from their land and ancestral homes by national park schemes, the objective of which was to colonize the erstwhile human habitations for preserving the species of wild animals, such as tigers and leopards.

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Communities that at one time survived by showing tricks of performing bears, monkeys, parrots, owls, etc., have suffered a great deal due to the implementation of the Act banning the exhibiting of animals. A report in The Tribune (2 September 2001) gave the case of such a community in Haryana which was rendered jobless as a consequence of this Act. As it was unable to locate an alternative pattern of economic livelihood, it became most susceptible to the anti-social elements, which started visiting their habitations luring males to crime and women to immoral activities. Put differently, the criminalization of the community began once its traditional life-support system broke down.

Similarly, according to a petition that the President of the Bhartiya Bar-girls Association had submitted to the Governor of Maharashtra, on 15 April 2005, about eighty per cent bar girls came from those communities that used to be of traditional dancers and entertainers in north and south India. At one time, dancing and entertaining received patronage from feudal classes. As the latter declined, the dancing and entertaining communities took to street performances, which also began disappearing with the advent of the modern forms of entertainment (particularly television and cinema). Under these circumstances, with all sources of livelihood drying up, these communities were constrained to send their girls to dance in bars, where they were most prone to sexual exploitation and abuse. These women bore the brunt of exploitation, since with the money they earned they invariably supported a large family, often of jobless people.

Two factors have acted conjointly. First, the traditional livelihoods have drastically declined, exposing people to occupations that they would take up only in distress. We may call these ‘push’ factors. Second, there has been a phenomenal expansion of the entertainment industry, which offers attractive money. These are ‘pull’ factors. Deprived of the avenues of traditional livelihood, women are pulled to new jobs in bars, under the garb of which their exploitation occurs. Studies point out that a large number of bar girls are drawn from the Denotified and Nomadic communities of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh (mostly Agra), Delhi, Kerala, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The worst these girls underwent was when the bars were closed down. Asian Tribune (of 10 May 2005) reported that the former bar girls were treated as criminals and arrested on charge of prostitution.

Certain communities have been labelled as practicing ‘caste-based prostitution’. On this issue, the Commission’s view is that one must make a distinction between ‘certain individuals from a community indulging in prostitution’ and ‘the entire community practicing prostitution’. It is the former that may be empirically found; but the latter is nothing but a figment of our collective imagination, which has done an irreparable damage to the reputation of communities. The media is also responsible for this, for it has carried out articles with misleading titles; for instance, a

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national English language newspaper published an article on 9 July 2002 with the following title: ‘A Rajasthan Village where Prostitution is Tradition.’ The outcome of this is that communities are stigmatised; the entire community comes to bear the stigma of prostitution. Clients and touts visit them for trafficking, coaxing their women to take to prostitution. Law-enforcing agencies start troubling them. If some women of these communities have taken to prostitution, it is because of a combination of several factors, such as loss of traditional means of livelihood, non-availability of alternative occupations in village as a consequence of caste restrictions, and lack of skills for taking up a job in towns and cities. Ironically, the upper caste men who visit these women at nights observe all norms of impurity and purity during the day.

The Commission carried out a preliminary study of a Denotified and Nomadic community in north India, and found that not all its families were in prostitution. The powerful members of neighbouring communities sexually abused the women of this community. The community was of homeless nomads, having moved four times from one location to the other in the last fifteen years. Their men were harassed frequently for any thefts and robberies in the area. The members of the community perforce had to succumb to the wishes of their powerful neighbours, including forcing their women to submit to the sexual demands of the outsiders. They knew that if they did not, they would be forced to move out from their present location. With adverse circumstances surrounding them, the community envisioned its future in uncertain terms.

Besides the stigma of prostitution, there are other dishonours with which the Denotified and Nomadic communities suffer. Some of them are supposed to be illegal brewers of liquor; some are supposed to practice witchcraft; some are supposed to transport opium. The Commission feels that all these stereotypes are wrongly attached to these communities. It is unfortunate that for the activities of a few individuals – and deviant persons may be found in any group – the entire community is branded as the practitioner of an illegal practice, or the harbourer of an evil. The axe falls on the community as a whole, but the worst affected are its women (particularly the young) and children (particularly the female). Furthermore, the Commission also submits that the vulnerability of women increases many times when the community adheres to ‘backward’ cultural practices, when the community itself looks down upon its women. Undoubtedly, many Denotified and Nomadic communities allow their women to work outdoors, choose their own spouses, permit divorce through negotiation, and have remarriage. Child marriage may not exist among many of them.

If this is one side of the story, the other is that women are also victims of the customs and institutions of their communities. For instance, their councils (panchāyat) may play an extremely negative role as far as women’s issues are concerned. India Today (12 July 1999) reported the case of a Denotified community in the district of Tonk (Rajasthan) that had the practice of extremely humiliating and painful virginity test done on women on their bridal nights. If they failed the test, they were

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tortured to name their lovers, who in turn were levied with heavy fines by the community's council. Women were also forced to name not one but many lovers, so that each could be forced to pay the fine. The council also had some more barbaric practices (such as holding in hands red hot iron weighing as much as two kilograms, remaining submerged in water for a long time) for women to prove their virginity. If they failed the test, the council members could go to any extent in imposing fine or corporeal punishment on the person concerned.

The councils could also label a woman a ‘witch’, for which she would suffer lifelong. Like societies in general, the Denotified and Nomadic communities are also changing in the direction of the main society. They are also taking up the dress patterns, material things, languages and dialects, and customs and practices of the others. Some of the Denotified and Nomadic societies, which have become a little better off, do not allow their women to work outdoors. They are more and more confined to the four walls of the household. The custom of demanding dowry at the time of marriage is replacing the earlier custom of bride-wealth. In the latter, women's abilities in the system of production and reproduction were fully recognized.

They not only produced heirs to the male-dominated households, but also worked in the fields, and contributed significantly to economic pursuits, thus supplementing the household income.

Once some of these communities adopted the system of dowry, the position of women has drastically changed. Now, they are seen more as an economic liability. The Commission is sad to note that some of them, because of the devaluation of women, have resorted to the evil of female foeticide. The point we wish to put forth is that the condition of women has deteriorated not only because of the external forces and the relationship of these communities with the outside world, but also because of their ‘barbaric’ practices, which have singled out women for oppression, and the changes that are surfacing among them. Because of these changes, the condition of old women, widows, and small girls has really worsened.

Two issues demanding our serious attention are of education and health. Literacy rate among women of these communities is abysmally low, so is their standard of health. In addition, in many cases, women are the actual breadwinners of their households. It has been observed that the number of female-headed households among them is fast increasing, which shows a reversal of traditional gender roles with males as ‘breadwinners’ and females ‘homemakers’. These ‘breadwinning’ women are exposed to a large number of threats and unsavoury conditions from the outside world, especially in their work contexts.

Our developmental policies should be gender-sensitive. They should take care of all strata of women. Our aim should be to delineate policies that eventually lead to the empowerment of women.

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**Annexure-2**

**Recommendations of Technical Advisory Group**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, vide its notification dated 8th September 2006 constituted the Technical Advisory Group with the following terms of reference:

- a. To review the existing schemes and programmes and to suggest suitable modifications therein for the development of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes.
- b. To suggest action plan for the development of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes,
- c. To examine the representations received from various organizations representing Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes; and
- d. To examine and make recommendations on any other matter referred to it by the Government of India.

**A. Definition of Denotified Tribes**

- i. Just as there is a Schedule for Tribes and a Schedule for Castes, no specific Schedule for Denotified Tribes - that is, the communities notified under a series of Criminal Tribes Acts during the colonial period—was formed. Some of them have come to be placed as Scheduled Tribes, some as Scheduled Castes, some others as OBCs, and a few of them excluded from all of these.
- ii. For the purpose of formulating a clear definition of the Denotified Tribes of India, all communities or segments of communities, that had been placed under the Criminal Tribes Acts, beginning with CTA 1871, in any part of colonial India, till their denotification in the 1950s, are to be considered as Denotified Tribes throughout the Union of India irrespective of their present geographical location.
- iii. The most authentic list of Denotified Tribes was presented in the Report of Aiyengar Committee (constituted by R. N. 22/1/49— Police-I, Dt. 28. 9. 49) prepared for the Union Government (List reproduced on pages 257 to 262). Over and above the communities or tribes listed in the Aiyengar Committee Report, all other tribes or communities, whose denotification preceded the date of appointment of the Aiyengar Committee, are to be considered as Denotified Tribes.

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#### A1. Definition of Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes

- There has not been any clear definition of Nomadic Tribes, or Semi-nomadic Tribes in existence used for official purposes of the Government of India.
- The only reliable list of Nomadic Tribes compiled so far can be sourced from the 1931 Census of India.
- All Tribes and Communities included in the 1931 Census as Nomadic or Semi-nomadic are to be treated for the purposes of the Government of India as Nomadic Tribes. Any Nomadic Tribe or Semi-nomadic Tribe recognized in any state of India, or a Union Territory as such, is to be recognized uniformly as Nomadic Tribes throughout the Union of India, for the purpose of the Government of India.
- As and when the future Census enumeration brings to notice any other such communities showing livelihood patterns that are nomadic or semi nomadic, the communities in point be considered through a proper scrutiny for inclusion in the category of Nomadic Tribes.

#### A2 Official Listing and Placement of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes

- i. Any tribe or community falling within the definition of Denotified Tribes, and recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in one or more state/states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Tribe for the purpose of the Government of India.
- ii. Any tribe or community falling within the definition of Denotified Tribes, and recognized as a scheduled Caste in one or more state/states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Caste throughout the Republic for the purpose of the Government of India.
- iii. Any tribe or community falling within the definition of Denotified Tribes, and is recognized variously as a Scheduled Tribe as well as Schedule Caste in different states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Tribe uniformly throughout the Republic for the purpose of the Government of India.
- iv. Any tribe or community that falls “within the list of Denotified Tribes as per the definition of Denotified Tribes given in this report, and not included in either the schedule of tribes or the schedule of castes, is to be included either in the schedule of tribes or the schedule of castes by the government of India on the basis of the merit of the case.
- v. Any Tribe or Community or Group recognized in any part, State or Union Territory of India as Nomadic or Semi-nomadic, is to be recognized uniformly throughout the Union of India, for the purpose of the Government of India, as Nomadic Tribe.
- vi. Any Nomadic or Semi nomadic tribe or community that falls within the definition of Nomadic Tribe as given in this report, and recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in one or



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more state/states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Tribe for purpose of the Government of India.

- vii. Any Nomadic or Semi nomadic tribe or community that falls within the definition of Nomadic Tribes given in this report, and recognized as a scheduled Caste in one or more state/states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Caste throughout the Republic for the purpose of the Government of India.
- viii. Any Nomadic or Semi nomadic tribe or community that falls within the definition of Nomadic Tribes given in this report, and recognized variously as a Scheduled Tribe as well as Schedule Caste in different states, is to be recognized as Scheduled Tribe uniformly throughout the Republic for the purpose of the Government of India.
- ix. Any Nomadic or Semi nomadic tribe or community that falls within the list of Nomadic tribes as defined in this report, and not included in either the schedule of tribes or the schedule of castes, is to be included either in the schedule of tribes or the schedule of castes by the Government of India on the basis of the merit of the case.
- x. A separate Schedule for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes ought to have been created immediately after Independence. In absence of such a Schedule, the Technical Advisory Group strongly recommends that a Comprehensive National List of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes and Communities (CNL-DNSTC), at par with Schedule of Tribes and Schedule of Castes, may be prepared for the following purposes:
  - a. For ensuring an equitable delivery of rights, entitlements and social justice;
  - b. For redressal of the stigma of criminality;
  - c. For facilitating inter-ministerial coordination in dealing with these Tribes and Communities.

#### A3. Ministerial Allocations

For Administrative purposes,

- i. The Denotified and Nomadic communities listed in the Scheduled of Tribes are to be placed under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- ii. The Denotified and Nomadic communities listed in the Schedule of Castes are to be placed under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- iii. All other Nomadic tribes and communities are to be placed under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Similar distribution of ministerial responsibilities is to be brought into effect at the level of state governments.

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#### A 4. Enumeration of communities and locations

- i. In order to update the listing of Nomadic and Semi nomadic communities, the Census of India is required to undertake the relevant exercise.
- ii. In order to determine the population of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi nomadic communities, the Indian Institute of Statistics is required to prepare population projections.
- iii. In order to determine the precise desired locations of comprehensive development schemes for Denotified Tribes, the list of Settlements established during the colonial period, and cited by the Aiyengar committee report, is to form the baseline. In addition to this, the settlements maintained in the post independence period that have substantial population of the DNTs and NTs are also to be taken in account for the above purpose.

#### B. Rights, Entitlements and Protective Mechanisms

1. The Habitual Offenders Act, if it is in force in any Indian State, may be abolished forthwith.
2. Human Rights Protection Cells may be established in the areas that have sizeable population of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes.
3. Human Rights Commission in various States may be given the responsibility of monitoring the proposed cells. Additional officers may also be appointed in districts having a large population of DNTs and NTs, for this purpose.
4. The NHRC had suggested in their 7th Annual Report that a senior police officer be appointed in every state to look in to the cases of violation of human rights of Denotified and Nomadic tribes and report to the state Human Rights Commission. This recommendation may be implemented, except that it may be a welfare officer or an officer from the Tribal Ministry, who may be made responsible for reporting violation of human rights to the Human Rights Commission.
5. It may be ensured that total liberation and full rehabilitation of bonded labourers and child labour, a majority of whom are DNTs, is done. The creation of separate authority exclusively for the DNTs and NTs may be considered for this very specific purpose.
6. The entire administrative machinery, especially the police, needs to be sensitized and reoriented to the problems of these communities. National Police Academy and other Police Training Institutes may be instructed to bring about attitudinal changes among police officials by incorporating suitable items in the curriculum. There is ample evidence that settled DNTs are forced by the police to commit crimes like brewing of illicit liquor in order to get their share of the earnings. While rehabilitating such groups,

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care may be taken to see that the local police are not given the authority over them for a specified period, so that they are actually given the breathing space for starting their new lives.

7. A listing of such vulnerable communities who need to be ‘protected’ from the police may be undertaken and special protection given to them against police reprisals and atrocities.
8. Besides training of the senior officials of the Police Department for dealing with the problems of DNTs in a humane and considerate manner, there is a need for special training of the subordinate staff made mandatory especially since the interface of the DNTs is with Head Constables PSI, and Pis.
9. Police can be involved in the development and welfare programmes for these groups to give them a first-hand understanding of the vulnerability rather than their ‘criminality’. However, this involvement is intended for their education as a part of their curriculum at the Police Academy, and not for the police personnel in positions of authority.
10. Women of DNTs and NTs are especially vulnerable as it is noticed that men of other communities, especially those of the police force, try to sexually harass them. In case DNT men try to protect their women against such harassment, their DNT status is constantly used to get them beaten, jailed, or even killed in retaliation. A Special Cell in the proposed Vimukta Janajati Commission should be established, so that women of the DNTs and NTs come forward and complain cases of sexual harassment
11. More than a mere thumb impression on any legal document (in case of police complaint, or as a witness, etc.) may be made mandatory from the illiterate members of these communities in place of signature. It has been frequently found that such an impression can be taken by force. Some measure is necessary, like a witness testifying that the signatory indeed understood and voluntarily agreed with what was being thumb printed.
12. In the case of DNTs and NTs, it would be necessary to protect them from harassment on mere suspicion. A suitable revision should be made in the Criminal Procedure Code to prevent such harassment.
13. A massive information campaign may be launched to sensitize the public about problems faced by the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, and the stigma of criminality.
14. The Prevention of Atrocities Act, which is currently applicable to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, may be extended to Denotified Nomadic and Semi nomadic tribes.
15. An Act named ‘DNTs and NTs(Prevention of Atrocities) Act’ may be enacted with a view to providing for exclusive special court of sessions with judges, investigation

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officers and public prosecutors. The proposed Act should include social and economic boycott and blackmail as substantive crimes of atrocity.

16. Further, the proposed Act should be extended to take into account atrocities caused by policemen and state officials as well to give a positive signal to the members of the society who harass these communities.
  17. There is also a need to include under the proposed Atrocities Act the harassment caused to these communities by misuse of the Goonda Act and the Anti-beggary Act. It has been found that a majority of the hapless individuals booked under these acts belong to the DNTs, NTs and SNTs.
  18. Since the livelihood of these communities is not ensured by the state, it may be considered an Atrocity to book persons of these communities under the laws for conservation and for animal protection. Communities like Saperas and Madaris who work with animals, or communities who continue to depend on forests for a living, may be exempt from these laws till alternative economic rehabilitation is ensured. This may be done on a case to case basis.
  19. A pernicious interpretation of what is a ‘traditional’ occupation may be avoided when protection to traditional livelihoods of communities is sought. Being forced by the men folk of the community into exhibition of the body by women of the community to earn a living may be interpreted as a manifestation of patriarchy rather than a traditional ‘art’ form. Cases where prostitution with ‘traditional sanction’ by the community exists ‘may require more imaginative treatment while creating livelihood.
  20. The Act to Prevent Atrocity Against DNT and NTs, proposed in B-xv may have a component of monetary compensation in instances of atrocity caused by the police and others, and which may be paid by the State to the families of persons suffering loss of life or livelihood due to such atrocity.
  21. As a way of some moral ‘compensation’ to the community as a whole, the government may install at some selected locations having a substantial DNT population, memorials on the lines of war memorials. These will be symbolic of public admission of the historical and collective injustice caused to these people for a century and a half. These memorials will also serve the purpose of reminding the public of the collective responsibility of the state and the society to ensure that the atrocities are not perpetrated again.
- B1. Non-displacement Guarantee, Compensation Norms
- i. Adequate Compensation in the form of land is to be given to the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes wherever they are displaced due to any reason.

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- ii. Once land is made available, care may be taken to ensure that the pattas are jointly held by men and women to ensure gender equality.
- iii. Any scheme of rehabilitation to be undertaken may be based on a clear assessment of the adverse impact on livelihoods and other disadvantages arising out of rehabilitation.
- iv. There is a need to create norms for paying compensation to those DNTS who get displaced due to the present urban demolition drives.
- v. There are at present no parameters available, till the new National Policy on Compensation for Displacement comes into effect, to measure the damages caused by displacement to families belonging to Nomadic Tribes. Dwelling Rights, in absence of proper land records, need to be recognized as ‘value’ for assessing the damages and the compensation package.
- vi. There is a need to create a ‘Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Rehabilitation Act’. The Act may include the following :
  - a) Allotment of houses with adequate space for raising animals;
  - b) Provision of water and other amenities;
  - c) Land for cultivation, which may initially supplement their subsistence and gradually may become their primary occupation;
- vii. The compensation norms for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi- Nomadic Communities may be group-oriented:
  - a) for those who have settled to normal agriculture or other vocations;
  - b) those who still lead nomadic life;

#### B 2. Protection of Electoral Rights and Mobile Voting System

- i. Persons belonging to Nomadic Tribes may be given Mobile Voting Cards (MVCs) to enable them to exercise their democratic duty of voting during elections. These MVCs may have validity throughout the Migrational Trajectory of the Nomadic Tribes, while the votes can get registered for pre- determined locations and constituencies.
- ii. A special drive for grant of voting rights to the Denotified and Nomadic communities may be launched by the Election Commission of India so that Voter’s Identity Cards can be issued to members of these communities in a time bound manner, and the members of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes are able to exercise their voting rights.

#### B 3. Forest, Grazing and Passage Rights

- i. Forest rights, grazing rights and passage rights for Nomadic pastoralists, across state boundaries and within a single state for the communities dependent on sheep, camel, goat,

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yak, buffalo and other animals, bees, birds or insects need to be ensured. In order to initiate the process, the benefit of Schedule Tribes

(Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2006 may be extended to Pastoral nomadic Tribes, and ‘Indian Forest Act’ and ‘Wild Life Protection Act’ may be reviewed and properly amended to ensure that the peripetatic groups and pastoral nomads are not harassed by the grazing land authority or forest authority.

- ii. A Grazing Land Development Board may be set up, with proper community representation, to develop special pastoral and grazing lands. In the meanwhile, the existing grazing areas may be reserved for pastoral groups.

#### B 4. Issuance of Domicile and Birth Certificates

- i. Nomadic and Denotified communities often face difficulty in obtaining birth certificates and domicile certificates. The difficulty is more acute in obtaining domicile certificates. Provision may be made for an easy issuance of these certificates; and the officials who do not provide the certificates may be punished under the proposed Prevention of Atrocities Act.
- ii. Issuing certificates for birth, domicile or any other form of certification necessary for protection of entitlement and rights may be made a responsibility of the local administration.

#### B 5. Protection to Women

- a. A Special Cell for protection of Rights and Entitlements for the women of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes and Communities may be created within the National Commission for Women.
- b. A Womens’ Cell for the protection of Rights and Entitlements of the women of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes may be created within the proposed VimuktaEvam Ghumantu Janjati Commission as proposed in this report.

#### B 6. Representation of DNTs in Democratic Bodies

The population of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes and Communities in the country is sufficiently large to deserve a substantial representation in the Parliament. It will be desirable to initiate the process of ensuring proper representation of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in both houses of the Parliament

#### C. Livelihood-Security

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- 1.1 The provisions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme should be immediately extended to the denotified and nomadic tribes wherever they are.
- 1.2 A Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Development Authority is to be set up with branches in areas where there is sizeable concentration of population of these communities. This authority may have the following mandate:
  - i. To create a single window system from initiation to finalization of schemes livelihood support.
  - ii. To facilitate forward linkages for the units set up under the aegis of the Board.
  - iii. To facilitate finance at a nominal rate of interest.
  - iv. To provide entrepreneurial trainings and seed capital for setting up of enterprises.
- 1.3 Ten percent space in commercial complexes may be reserved for allotment in rural, semi urban and urban areas for the commercial activities that the Denotified and Nomadic tribes may wish to undertake. This space may be leased out to the Self-help Groups to carry out activity in micro-enterprise.
- 1.4 To set up at the national level, with branches in each major commercial regions of India a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), to procure and market the the craft, arts and other products of the DNTs and NTs.

#### C 1. Hostels for Students & Old Age Houses

- i. For encouraging Middle school and High school level education, hostels may be created for the children from Denotified and Nomadic Tribes. In addition, special residential schools are to be conceptualized and created for these children.
- ii. Special provision for Old-Age Community Housing needs to be made so that they do not have to ‘legalize’ their deprivation reflected in their begging or by registering themselves under the present public order law as ‘criminals’ in order to find shelter in the Social Defense Community Wards.
- iii. A Rapid Housing and Construction plan is to be conceptualized and implemented for the Denotified and Nomadic communities.

#### C 2. Healthcare

- i. A combined plan of nutrition and health care for DNTs and NTs and their livestock be drawn and implemented in a time-bound manner, “which may include:
  - a. Mobile medical units for immunization,

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- b. Maternity and child-care along with nutritional food to the mother during pregnancy, during one year after the delivery and to the female child until she is three years.
  - c. Free medical facilities in central and state govt hospitals.
  - d. For medical treatment, a DNT or NT patient and one attendant may be made eligible to avail of free travel in public transport systems
  - e. Families and livestock may be covered under a medical insurance scheme. The premiums for the insurance scheme may be paid by the Central Government.
- ii. The DNT-NT District Development Authority, as proposed in CI-ii, be entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the DNT and NT health programme. In cases of denial of these provisions, the DDA be asked to take up the matter. Any denial of health care and nutritional food to them and their livestock by authorities be treated as an atrocity against them punishable under the proposed Prevention of Atrocities Act (DNT-NT).

#### C 3. Education

- i. Special scholarships and book banks may be created to provide to DNTs students from primary school to Higher education.
- ii. The number of primary, secondary and senior schools, colleges and vocational training institutes accessible to these communities may be adequate to cater to the entire NT & DNT population.
- iii. In areas where there are large numbers of DNT and NT communities, special measures to improve education may be implemented intensively so that within a specified time the educational standard of these communities is brought on par with the others.
- iv. Mobile schools may be set up at the locations of their stay and within the entire route of their migration so that no child remains without access to education.
- v. The mid-day meal scheme may be put in place as an incentive for the children to attend school and to make for their lack of nutrition.
- vi. Residential schools for these communities may be adequately provided as a way of promoting education. Given ‘die vulnerability of the DNT and NT children, special care may be taken to protect them from being mistreated and exploited by the staff of these schools.
- vii. The Government may launch special vocational training programs for these communities by setting up polytechnics, agricultural training centre and craft-making workshops.



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- viii. A study of the occupational skills of these communities may be undertaken at the national level in order to determine: the shifts away from the traditional occupations, trades and vocations so that appropriate vocational avenues can be created for them
- ix. The ‘Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology’, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, and the Central Institute of Indian Languages may be entrusted the task of developing text-books, reference books, supplementary reading materials and terminologies in the languages of these communities.

#### D. National Commission for Vimukta Janjatis

A Permanent National Commission, known as Vimukta Evam Ghumantu Janajati Rashtriya Ayog may be set up for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes, by following the precedence of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes that has been set up under Article 8A on the bifurcation of the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, to oversee the implementation of various safeguards suggested in this report for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes. The Commission may consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three full time Members (including one lady Member). The term of Members of the Commission will be three years from the date of assumption of charge.

#### Duties and functions:

The Commission should be assigned the following duties and functions:

- a) To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the violation of rights or denial of entitlements provided for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes in this report (Chapter 12), as well as under any law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government, and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;
- b) To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and entitlements of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes;
- c) To participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, and to evaluate the progress of their development;
- d) To present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
- e) To make in such reports, recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for effective implementation of those entitlements and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, and

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- f) To discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

The Commission shall discharge the following other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, namely: -

- i. Measures to be taken to safeguard rights and entitlements of the denotified tribal communities and nomadic communities over grazing land mineral resources, water resources, etc. as per law;
- ii. Measures to be taken for the development of nomadic and semi- nomadic communities and to work for more viable livelihood strategies;
- iii. Measures to be taken to improve the efficacy of relief and rehabilitation measures for Nomadic and Pastoral groups displaced due to atrocity;
- iv. Measures to be taken for ensuring the protection of human rights and human dignity of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes;
- v. Measures to be taken to provide electoral rights and mobile voting cards to the Nomadic and Semi-nomadic tribes.

#### Powers of the Commission:

While investigating the matters referred to any competent authority of the proposed national commission to inquire into any complaint referred to the Commission, the Commission shall have full powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and in particular in respect of the following matters:

- a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any pan of India and examining her or him on oath;
- b) requiring the discovery and production of any documents;
- c) receiving evidence on affidavits;
- d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;
- e) issuing summons/communications for the examination of witnesses and documents;
- f) any other matter which the President may by rule determine.

#### Consultation by Governments with the Commission:

Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Denotified and Nomadic Tribes.

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#### Monitoring:

While investigating matters relating to the safeguards provided under the Constitution, the Commission will monitor the implementation and working of safeguards such as:

- a) Acting upon Article 23 of the Constitution which prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labour, etc, in respect of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes
- b) Prohibition of child labour under Article 24, in respect of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes
- c) Educational safeguards under Article 15(4) for reservation of seats in educational institutions
- d) Economic safeguards under Article 244 and working of Fifth and Sixth Schedules and release of grams for raising the level of administration in tribal areas and Special Nomadic Zones
- e) To safeguard the distinct language, script or culture under Article 29(i)
- f) Working of service safeguards provided under Articles 16(4), 16(4A), 16(4B) and 335 providing for adequate representation of Denotified and Nomadic as well as Semi-nomadic Tribes in appointments or posts
- g) Enforcement of various laws such as:
  - i. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the proposed Prevention of Atrocity to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes Act;
  - ii. Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 (in respect of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes);
  - iii. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 (in respect of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes);
  - iv. State Acts and Regulations concerning alienation and restoration of land belonging to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes;
  - v. Forest Conservation Act, 1980, in respect of Pastoral and Semi-nomadic Tribes;
  - vi. The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996;
  - vii. Minimum Wages Act, 1948, in respect of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes.

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**Annexure-3**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Bal Krishna Renke Commission**

1. The Terms of Reference of the Commission refer to Denotified, Nomadic and Semi nomadic Tribes. The Denotified Tribes include various Tribes notified as Criminal Tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. Some of these Tribes are Nomadic Tribes as well. The difference between Nomadic Tribes and Semi-nomadic Tribes (including pastoral nomads) is based on the frequency of their movement from one place to another. It is, therefore, desirable that the three categories may be reduced to two categories, viz, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) for the purpose of reference to these Tribes as a target group in the context of dealing with various issues relating to them. Henceforth, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes will be referred to as DNTs.
2. For implementing welfare schemes for DNTs. It is desirable that these Tribes are identified and their State/UT-wise lists are prepared by the States/UTs. The details of Denotified Tribes are contained in the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, and its subsequent amendments to facilitate the preparation of State/UT-wise lists of Denotified Tribes to the Commission in response to the Commission's questionnaire. Some States have made and sent the lists of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, but these lists do not appear to contain all the castes included in the category of Denotified & Nomadic Tribes. It is suggested that the State Government/UTs Which either do not have such lists or have incomplete lists may constitute a small Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary along with concerned officers, 2 – 3 community Leaders from DNTs, and one or two prominent anthropologists or sociologists as members to examine the inclusion of various castes in the list of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in the State/UT. To assist the aforesaid Committee in the States/UTs, the Commission has also prepared State/UT wise of nomadic tribes along with their synonyms based on evidence collected from various sources. These lists only suggestive and the Committee may consider them for inclusion in the State/UT lists only after proper survey and verification.
3. To conceptualise the welfare schemes for the DNT's and to work out the financial implications it is necessary that the States/UTs have information about their population in the State/UT in various Districts. Since DNT's have not been enumerated in the census as DNT's it is necessary that the States/UT's undertake a quick house to house survey of the Families of DNT's to work out their estimated population and their concentration in various Regions/Districts of States/UTs. This process may be completed in Six months.

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4. There is not authentic information about the population of DNT, in various States/UTs. Efforts were made to work out an estimated figure for their population. rough estimate based on the 1931 Census and other relevant information from various sources put their population between 10-12 crores in the country. However, to have a correct of their population it is desirable that the Union Government initiate steps to enumerate DNTs in the next census due 2011.
5. The Commission, during its visits to various States, noted that the Departments dealing with the welfare of DNTs are not adequately conversant with the socio-economic conditions of DNT s largely because of their lack of exposure to them. It is suggested that the State Governments may constitute an Advisory committee at the State level/UT level under the Chairmanship of he Chief Minister/Administrator of the UT. The Committee may include dominant anthropologists and sociologists, activists and community leaders of DNTs in addition to the concerned senior officers of the State Govt. /UT Administration. Similar Advisory Committees may be constituted at the District level under the Chairmanship of the District Magistrate and may include the Superintendent of Police, social activists and community leaders of DNTs. These Committees may hold their meetings at least every three months any may review and monitor the progress of various welfare schemes being implemented in the State/District for DNT’s and may draw up future action plans.
6. It has been seen that a large number of DNTs have been included either in the list of SCs. STs, or the OBC from time to time. However, these DNTs have not been able to take the benefit of various developmental schemes being implemented for SCs, and OBCs. In order to enable the DNTs to take the benefit of various developmental schemes being implemented for the poor, it is necessary that the Union/State/UT Governments frame and implement separate welfare schemes for them as a separate target group irrespective of the fact whether they belong to SCs. STs or OBCs.
7. To enable the members of DNTs to avail the benefits of various welfare schemes, it is necessary that they are issued caste Certificates expeditiously and in a time-bound manner by District Administration. The position with regard to the issue of Caste Certificates to DNT’s is fare from satisfactory. Also, if the applicant for the Caste Certificate is also an SC, ST or OBC, only one certificate needs to be issued for his belonging to a particular Denotified/Nomadic Tribe either SC, ST or OBC.

It is also suggested that the District Administration may be made the final authority for the issue of caste certificate and no higher Committee need to be constituted at any other level to judge the genuiness of the Certificate issued by the District Administration. It was found by the Commission that the Government of Maharashtra has constituted a ‘Validity Committee’ at the State level which examines each and every certificate issued by the District Administration. This not only take long time but also involves a great deal of hassle and inconvenience for the applicants. It is, therefore, recommended that the Government of Maharashtra may abolish the ‘Validity Committee’ forthwith.

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It is also suggested that the District Administration may organise special on the spot camps in the hamlets inhabited by DNT's for the issue of caste certificates so that the applicants may get caste certificates without much running around various Government offices.

8. The Commission wants to strike a note of caution to the States/UTs to exercise adequate vigilance and supervision in the matter of issue of Caste Certificates to avoid the possibility of issue of false certificates.
9. BPI (Below Poverty Line) card is another handicap faced by the DNT's and without BPL cards, they are not able to qualify for the benefits of various welfare schemes meant for the weaker sections and the downtrodden. The State Government may launch a special programme to have BPL cards issued to the eligible families belonging to DNTs.
10. Similarly a large number of DNT families are without Ration Cards which deprive them of the benefits of the Public Distribution System to purchase essential commodities at concessional rates from the Fair Price Shops. Tribes, particularly Nomadic Tribes, are largely BPL population. It is, therefore, necessary that the States/UT's undertake the exercise of issuing Ration Cards to DNT families by organizing a special campaign both for urban and rural areas.
11. The Denotified and particularly the Nomadic Tribes are unable to exercise their right to vote as either they are ignorant or are on move from one place to the other and have not been included in the voter's list. It is also because these people may not have permanent residences. Steps need to be taken by the Union Government, the Election Commission of India, and the State Governments to undertake a special campaign for inclusion of their names in the voters' lists.
12. It has been seen that DNTs are living in slum conditions all over the country both in urban and rural area. They live either in the open, small and makeshift tents or in small hutments or improvised pucca or Kachha houses. Not only the space occupied by such houses, etc., is far too inadequate in comparison to the size of their families but their settlements are virtually slums. During their visits to such settlements in some States, the Commission found that these settlements did not have the facility of common amenities like sanitation, clean drinking water, sewerage, electricity, roads and public latrines, etc. The local body did not appear to have done anything in this regard.

The need of the hour is that the local bodies ensure that the situation in such settlements is improved forthwith so that the DNTs are able to enjoy at least the basic civic amenities till they get shifted to better places of settlement.

13. It has also been seen that there are some housing colonies of DNTs in some cities and towns in the country but, apart from the fact that such colonies miserably lack civic amenities, they

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do not also have the facilities of a Community Centre/ Panchayat Hall, which could be used by the DNT families for marriages and other similar social functions/get-together(s), etc. Similarly, there are not play grounds for their children, gyms, etc. It is well known that members of DNTs are not allowed to use these facilities available in other nearby; area of the city/town. It is suggested that Local Bodies provide such facilities to the housing colonies of DNTs.

14. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and State Government UTs are responsible for implementing various schemes for the development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) These schemes, inter alia, relate to grant of various kinds of scholarships, construction of residential schools for boys and girls, hostels, coaching centres, educational loans, studies in foreign universities, training for various technical jobs like pilots etc. It is suggested that the Ministry may earmark appropriate outlays for such schemes for DNTs in the same ratio as is being presently done for SCs & STs through a dedicated system. Similarly, the Ministry of Rural Development may earmark separate funds for old age pension to DNTs.

It is also suggested that all the Ministries/ Departments/ PSUs and other Govt. agencies and institutions may extend the same benefits and concessions, etc., to DNTs as are being for SCs.

15. Housing is a basic human need. While a large number of Denotified Tribes are settled, Nomadic Tribes are generally on the move in pursuit of their traditional occupations for livelihood. Also, in view of the changing economic scenario, their age old traditional occupations are gradually losing relevance in providing the desired livelihood support. The Nomadic Tribes are increasingly veering to the view that they settle themselves at one place or the other and take to alternative professions.

Indira Awaas Yojana is the flagship scheme of the Union Government for providing housing to the rural poor which is being operated on 75:25 basis. The annual flow of funds from the state exchequer was Rs. 4400 crores during the X<sup>th</sup> Plan. While DNTs are also covered under the eligibility criteria under this scheme but since their priority is so low that it is estimated that the number of beneficiaries of this scheme from the category of DNTs is negligible.

The Commission is of the strong view that considering their number and the fact that they have not been given much importance in providing houses, the Central Govt. may earmark at least 50% of the current outlay for Indira Awaas Yojana for building houses only for DNTs during the XI<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent Plans and this scheme for DNTs may be rechristened as Indira Awaas Yojana for DNTs.

16. The problem of housing in urban areas is still worse. The continuing influx of population to urban areas has led to, inter alia, Slums where a large number of poor families have come and settled in tents. These families consist of migratory labour as also the DNTs. The living

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conditions of these families are not only subhuman but also create pressure on basic urban services for the entire urban population.

It is gratifying to note that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation has already launched an ambitious scheme under the Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Mission for Slum clearance and for the improvement of urban infrastructure in general. Since a large number of families belonging to DNTs live in such slums, the slum clearance programmes under the above scheme will enable these families to enjoy the benefits of this scheme in terms of house and urban infrastructure.

However, considering the poor plight of DNT's, it is suggested that the above scheme is slightly modified to provide that the DNTs of these slums may be given top priority for housing and development of urban infrastructure. It is hoped that a large number of DNT families will be benefited by the implementation of this scheme.

The scheme also lays down that housing should not be provided free to the beneficiaries and a minimum of 12% in general and 10% in the case of SC/ST/DC/OBC/PH and other weaker sections be charged. The Commission is of the view that considering the poor conditions of Nomadic Tribes, they may be charged only 5% as against 10% for SC/ST, etc.

The commission had an occasion to see this scheme being implemented by the Union Territory of Chandigarh and the Small Flats Schemes, 2006, being implemented by them. Though there was no distinction kept between the general and the DNT slum dwellers, the Commission found the implementation of the scheme to be one of the best and compliments the UT Administration for the same.

17. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is presently applicable only to certain big cities and towns in the country. There are a large number of smaller cities and towns also in the country. A large number of DNTs have settled and created slums in such small cities and towns as well. It is suggested that the States/UTs may implement similar Housing Schemes for DNT slum dwellers as in big cities and towns with a beneficiary contribution of 5% in case of DNTs. This scheme may be taken up for implementation on priority basis. It may also be ensured that the DNT families are not uprooted from their present location until alternative housing facilities are created for them.
18. The Central Government launched a scheme, namely, Golden Jubilee Rural Housing Finance Scheme in 1997-98. This scheme envisages the sanction of credit to individuals desirous of constructing/acquiring new dwelling units and for improving or adding to existing dwelling units in rural areas at normal rates of interest. Considering the shortage of houses for DNTs, it is suggested that this scheme may be reviewed and modified suitably in the changed circumstances with a view to benefiting the DNTs by providing for suitable subsidy in the rate of interest.



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19. Considering the size of the demand for houses for Nomadic Tribes, it is also suggested that the Union and the State Government may launch a scheme to develop Special Socio-Economic Settlement Zones (SSESZ) for Nomadic Tribes at suitable locations on the lines of the Special Economic Zones for industrial units. The SSESZs may be developed to provide to provide built up house to live along with a small piece of land attached to such houses to enable the family to carry on their profession as well. Locations of such SSESZ can be in the neighbourhood of either SEZs or the other industrial areas or trade or business centres to enable the residents to get an opportunity for employment Such SSESZs can be developed for at least 100 families at one place with minimum infrastructure, like electricity, water and schools, etc.
20. Education, by far, is a basic of change in the process of socio-economic development of disadvantaged groups. DNTs are no exception. While the Central Government launched its flagship programme of Sarva shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001-02 for the whole of the country irrespective of caste or religion and the national rate of literacy is gradually inching up, it has not been able to make much headway for DNTs mainly for two reasons. One, there is not enough awareness for education among the DNTs living in far flung areas and moving round the year from one place to the other in search of livelihood; and second the children of these Tribes are looked at as additional hands for eking out livelihood for the family. Thus, the rate of literacy among DNTs is much less than any other social segment of population. It is, therefore, necessary that special efforts are made to undertake a massive awareness programme for DNTs to convince them to send their children to schools. Though also promotes girls' education to eliminate gender disparities, the position of girls' education in DNT is far too bad and special efforts are to be made to improve the situation.
21. To attract more and more DNT children to schools there is an urgent need to open primary schools in the areas predominantly inhabited by DNTs if they do not already exist and provide free education to these students along with the ICDS facilities. Such schools can be run either by the State Government or by good NGOs with appropriate grants from the State Governments.
22. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims at universalising elementary education with community-ownership of the school system. The National Mission of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has constituted six sub-missions for various areas of SSA. While one of the sub-missions relates to education of disadvantaged groups including girls, SC/ST/minorities/urban deprived children and disabled children; this sub-mission does not specifically mention the DNT children. It is suggested that a separate sub-mission may be constituted for the DNT children to facilitate regular review of the performance of states in this regard. Similarly, a separate Task Force (TF) be constituted for this sub-mission with experts and specialists so that the TF can review and monitor the progress of SSA for DNTs including the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme.

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23. To further strengthen the educational infrastructure for DNTs, the Government need to open residential schools separately for boys and girls in the areas inhabited by DNTs for upper primary students. The scheme of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya launched in July, 2004 needs to have a separate annual target fixed for girls belonging to DNTs residing in interior rural areas in various States/UTs. This is a useful scheme and needs to be implemented on priority basis.
24. In order to further spread education among DNTs, the State Governments should open Residential Schools separately for boys and girls in DNT dominated areas for free education, lodging and boarding.
25. To facilitate the process of attracting boys and girls belonging to DNTs to Post Matric levels of education including technical education, the Government needs to open and run hostels separately for boys and girls at the District and Taluka levels. One or two such hostels need to be opened in Delhi on the same lines as done for the students belonging to the North-Eastern Region.
26. Along with the educational infrastructure, the government needs to create infrastructure for skill development of DNT students at various levels of education. This is extremely important in view of the increasing need for skilled manpower in the changing economic context as also the need for creating opportunities for the employment of DNTs. This will mean setting up polytechnics, it is, etc., in the DNT dominated Districts so that DNT students are equipped with the required skills to enable them to seek employment.
27. National Small Industries Corporation is running Technical Centres at various places in the country. It is also understood that NSIC is planning to open more such centres in partnership with the private entrepreneurs on franchise basis. These centres provide training for the development of entrepreneurship and also training in various trades to men and women irrespective of age. The minimum educational qualification for training in various trades is the ability to read and write. This facility of talent building will be extremely useful to the youth of the Denotified & Nomadic Tribes. It is suggested that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment may execute an MoU with the NSIC for training men and women belonging to Denotified & Nomadic Tribes in various parts of the country to enable them to either set up their cottage industries or seek wage employment in the trades in which they take training. The arrangement for such training to the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes may be made free of cost.
28. Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC), being the largest employment provider in rural areas are implementing a number of schemes for self-employment, or for setting up micro, small and medium industries in rural areas. For example, Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) is their latest flagship programme to provide employment in rural areas. It has been noticed that REGP and other schemes of KVIC do not specifically mention DNTs as beneficiaries like SC/ST/OBC/Women, Physically handicapped/ex-

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servicemen and Minority community. It is recommended that KVIC may also include DNTs as the Potential beneficiaries of their on-going schemes. This will provide DNTs an opportunity to seek gainful employment to improve their living standards.

29. A large number of members of Denotified & Nomadic Tribes are small artisans and make a variety of handicrafts in various parts of the country. These include items made of clay, plaster of paris, glass, stone, marble, bamboo, etc. The major problem being faced by these artisans is in the areas of procurement of raw material, marketing and credit, etc. It is, therefore desirable that the Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Limited, the Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Limited, extend the benefits of their schemes to the artisans belong to the Denotified & Nomadic Tribes.
30. A large number of DNT families earn their livelihood by selling vegetables. Fruits, *datun*, Second hand clothes and many other similar articles as street vendors/hawkers/ peddlers. However, they face difficulties in getting licenses from the Local Bodies. It is suggested that special market zones may be developed at suitable places in large cities, giving them priority in the allocation of space. Such special markets exists in several cities but under the titles of ‘Bhikbazar’ or ‘Chorbazar’, which actually are the poor man’s markets. These should be turned into dignified market places for the DNTs with priority given in space allocation for them.
31. It is also suggested that State Government may arrange to provide shall showrooms and marketing outlets to artisans belonging to Denotified & Nomadic Tribes in the urban market places. It will help them to market their products.
32. To ensure that the Bank Loans reach the DNTs to enable them to undertake suitable economic activities, it is necessary that an appropriate percentage of the Priority Sector Lending is targeted for the DNTs within the overall target for Priority Sector Lending and the sub-target of 25% for the weaker sections. The progress of disbursement of loans to DNTs under the Priority Sector Lending may be reviewed and monitored regularly by the District level Bankers Advisory Committees and the State Level Bankers Advisory Committee from time to time to ensure that the DNTs also receive an equitable portion of the bank credit.
33. It is gratifying to note that the Government had adopted financial inclusion as the mainstay of the rural credit policy in the country. In this context, it is strongly recommended that the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes be extended the benefit of this policy on priority basis by forming Self Help Groups of men and women among these Tribes.
34. DNTs are, by and large, the poorest section of the society and except that some of them have been included in the lists of SCs, STs, and OBCs from time to time, no separate welfare schemes have been implemented for them. As suggested earlier, DNTs need to be treated as a separate target group for the purpose of implementation of poverty alleviation programmes.

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In this context, it is necessary that a DNT Sub-Plan on the lines of SCSP may be implemented as an umbrella strategy to ensure follow of targeted financial and physical benefits from all the general sectors of development for the benefits of DNTs. Accordingly, States/UTs and Central Ministries may be required to formulate and implement DNT Sub-Plan for DNTs during the XI Plan as part of their annual plans by earmarking resources in proportion to their share in total population.

35. A separate Finance and Development Corporation for DNTs, like National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation may be set up at the centre which may implement similar welfare schemes for DNTs as is being done for the Scheduled Castes at present.
36. Similarly, DNT Finance and Development Corporations be set up by the States for identifying eligible DNT Families and motivating them to take advantage of the development related schemes, sponsoring the schemes to financial institutions for credit support, providing financial assistance in the form of margin money at low rate of interest and subsidy in order to reduce the repayment liability and providing necessary tie-up with other poverty alleviation programmes. The State level Finance & Development Corporation may also finance employment oriented schemes covering (i) Small Scale, Micro and Tiny Industry; and (iii) Transport and Service Sector.
37. They constitute the most socially and economically backward sections of the population. The fact that some of these tribes have been included in the list of SCs, STs, or OBC from time to time it has perhaps been presumed that they are getting the benefits of the welfare schemes implemented for SCs, STs or OBCs. Sadly, the situation is far from it. It is, therefore, extremely necessary that considering their population in the country the focus now shifts to DNTs as a separate target group of population and a suitable mechanism is evolved to channelise the government assistance earmarked for them through a separate dedicated delivery system. Accordingly, there is a need for a separate department for the welfare of DNTs at the State level, a separate Directorate of Welfare of DNTs and a separate District level officer for the welfare of DNTs in the State. Similarly, there is a need for a separate Ministry/Department for the welfare of DNTs at the Centre.
38. The Commission has noted that a large number of nomadic tribes have been pursuing their traditional occupations, and thus have been catering to various needs of the society. Unfortunately, almost all these professions have come to a naught due to either technological advancement and/or enactment of certain laws on various subject in the country. A typical example of this phenomenon is the enactment of laws relating to wild Life Protection, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Environment Protection. As a result of these laws, laksh and lakhs of snake charmers, monkey players, Kalandars, bird catchers and people using plants for herbal medicines, etc., have not only lost their professions in the middle of their lives, but are also facing police action and harassment by the NGOs and the Government employees every now and then. After having lost their professions being the only source of their livelihood through out the history of mankind, they are on the verge of

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starvation with there being no possibility of changing their professions for want of education or technical skill and know-how. While there is not denying the fact that such laws are desirable in the overall ecological and environmental security of the country, it is perhaps equally desirable to ensure that the people affected by such laws are satisfactorily rehabilitated. India is a large country with immense bio-diversity, flora and flora and fauna. Even if the relevant laws are amended to allow the Nomadic Tribes to pursue their traditional occupations involving wild life and plants, etc., it is not going to make much difference to the overall position of biological diversity in the country. It appears that this aspect has not been given adequate weightage before enacting these laws. It also needs to be appreciated that the current generation of people who have been pursuing these professions for a long time cannot take to alternative sources of livelihood at this late state of their life. Also training wild and domestic animals for entertaining people particularly in semi-urban and rural areas is not only a great ‘art’ in itself but also a great source of entertainment to the people. Since the animals provide a source of livelihood to a large number of families, it is unfair to think that they would treat their animals with cruelty. In view of this background, the Commission strongly recommends that the existing laws may be revisited and suitably amended to enable the nomadic tribes to continue to use wild animals and herbal plants without any restrictions to pursue their traditional professions.

39. Pastoral Communities are an integral part of Nomadic Tribe population in the country. Their traditional occupation has been livestock breeding and marketing and sale of livestock products like milk and wool, etc. The livestock generally include sheep, goat, buffalo, cow and camel. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, they are in distress and are finding it difficult to continue their traditional occupation for certain reasons. The basic and the foremost reason is the diminishing grazing lands for their herds. Traditionally, grazing lands have been earmarked in rural areas but, unfortunately, with the passage of time these lands have either been illegally occupied or have been diverted for some alternative use. This is adversely affecting the occupation of pastoral communities. In view of this situation, State Governments have to ensure that pastures and grazing lands as provided in the revenue records of villages and towns are restored to their original character. In addition, new pastoral zones with basic amenities for the pastoralists may also be developed.
40. The Commission has already recommended the setting up of residential schools for the children of nomadic tribes. It is suggested that similar \*\*\*dential Schools be run for the children of pastoral communities and should be located on the migratory routes of these communities so that the parents find it easy to send their children to such schools and to remain in touch with them during their movement from one place to the other.
41. It has been seen in the past that the herds of the pastoralists suddenly fall prey to natural calamities and thus adversely affect the pastoral communities. It is suggested that the Government compensate these communities for the adverse effect of such calamities.

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43. Pastoralists rearing sheep, goats and camels are deprived of several benefits as these animals are not included in the list of “useful animals”. It is suggested that the above mentioned animals may also be recognised as ‘useful animals and necessary steps undertaken for their development.
44. One of the major problems being faced by the Denotified Tribes is a continuing stigma of criminality about them which has made them vulnerable to frequent police action merely on the basis of suspicion. It is, therefore, necessary that the Denotified Tribes get rid of this stigma at the earliest and live a dignified life like the mainstream citizenry of the country. To achieve this objective it is necessary that the syllabus and contents of training for police from top to bottom is reviewed by a small Committee under the Chairmanship of the Union Home Secretary in the Centre and the Chief Secretaries in the States/UTs, and based on its recommendations in the country to save DNTs from the avoidable harassment by police by implicating them in false criminal cases. It is also necessary that a massive awareness programme is launched to sensitise both the police and the public that these Tribes are not criminal by birth.
45. The DNT’s are also victims of atrocities like Scheduled Castes committed by anti-social elements. It is, therefore, necessary that the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 be, mutatis mutandis, made applicable to DNTs as well and the central assistance be granted to the States in the same ratio as in the case of SCs and STs. Similarly, special cells may be set up in the States for the implementation of the above Act. To expeditiously prosecute cases under this Act, the number of Special Courts be suitably increased to effectively deal with the cases relating to DNTs.

It is also necessary that the progress for implementation of this Act is reviewed and monitored by the Central Government with the senior officers of the State Government from time to time.

46. It has been observed in many villages that villagers do not want the DNTs to stay in their villages or village area; some Gram panchayats (GPs) have resolved to evict the DNTs from their GPs; and in some villages Bastis of the DNTs are ragged or destroyed. Hence, to curb this, it is suggested that the Government may award incentives in the form of subsidy/loan or other monetary assistance to the villages where the DNTs are included in the development progress of the village through creation of assets for the DNTs like houses, palm, small piece of agricultural lands, right to use the water source of the village, employment guarantee schemes, etc.
47. It has been observed that in most of the cases of atrocities committed against the DNT’s the Villagers or a group of villagers are involved and all the accused get acquitted due to lack of identification and evidence. Hence it is recommended that whenever such a crime takes place where all the villagers or a group of villagers are involved, the entire village should be

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collectively punished. The punishment may be in the form of stopping or holding up the financial assistance, or loans which are supposed to come to the village for at least 2/3 years.

48. The effect of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1971 is the legacy of the British and it need to be brought to an end to save a large number of people belonging to Denotified & Nomadic Tribes from avoidable police harassment. Apart from the aforesaid recommendations, it is also suggested that the investigation of criminal cases filed against the Denotified & Nomadic Tribes is done by a Dy. S.P. It is also suggested that a senior police officer at the District level be specially authorized to hear the grievances of misuse of law against and harassment of the members of the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes. Also, in case the investigation of a criminal case against a member of the Denotified & Nomadic Tribe does not fructify for prosecution, the victim should be financially compensated by the State Government for his harassment for which a suitable policy/criteria may be determined by the State/UT administration.
49. The stigma of criminality and the consequent harassment of Denotified & Nomadic Tribes is the major problem affecting crores of people in the whole of the country. It is suggested that the Union Government may organise a conference of Chief Ministers of States and Administrators of Union Territories to discuss various issues relating to this problem and the steps that need to be taken not only to sensitise the administration in general and the police in particular but also to generate awareness among the people at large to save Denotified & Nomadic Tribes from harassment at the hands of the police and the anti-social elements. The major problems affecting the DNTs are their involvement in false cases by the police, atrocities by anti-social elements and restricting the freedom of movement in pursuance of their traditional occupations, etc.
50. To prevent the harassment of DNTs in general, it is recommended that a Member each of the National Human Rights Commission at the National level and a Member of the State Human Rights Commission at the State level is appointed from amongst the DNTs.
51. The women belonging to DNTs are particularly prone to harassment not only by police but also by antisocial elements. To save DNT women from such harassment and to enquire into such case and to create a feeling of goodwill about them in society, it is desirable that a Member each of the National Commission for Women and of the State Commission for Women be appointed from amongst the DNT women.
52. The Union Government has opened a new chapter in the history of the process of upliftment of socially and economically disadvantaged groups by constituting the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic Tribes and by entrusting it the task of making recommendations for the development of DNTs in the country. Considering the fact that the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes are the most marginalized and disadvantaged sections of our society, it is desirable that a regular National Commission for the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes is constituted to provide constitutional safeguards to the members of the Denotified

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and Nomadic Tribes like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and to aid and assist the Union the State Government to review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the National Commission for Denotified and Nomadic Tribes. The National Commission may be created by an amendment in the Constitution on the same lines as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for scheduled Tribes.

53. Considering their Socio-economic conditions, which are generally worse than those of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, it is suggested that they may be given constitutional status and support on the same lines as given to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes under Article 341 and Article 342 of the Constitution. Accordingly, the Constitution may be amended by adding article 342 A as follows:-

“342-A. Scheduled Communities-

- (1) The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be scheduled Communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes), in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be.
- (2) Parliament may , by law, include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Communities specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but have as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.”

54. Similarly, the Constitution may be amended to included “Scheduled Communities” under Article 330 and Article 332 to enable these communities to be eligible for reservation of seats in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.
55. Simultaneously Scheduled Communities (Denotified & Nomadic Tribes) which have been included in the list of Scheduled Castes and in the list of Scheduled Tribes may be excluded form these lists in accordance with Article 341 (2) and Article 342 (2) of the Constitution. Also, such Scheduled communities as have been included in the list of the OBCs may be excluded from such list in accordance with the provisions of National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
56. Considering the population of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in the country and their non-participation in the democratic process, it is suggested that seats in every Gram Panchayat may be reserved for Scheduled communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) including



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women on the same lines and on the same principle as is being done for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Similarly, seats may be reserved for Scheduled communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) in Block/Taluka Panchayats and Zila Panchayats/Zila Parishads on the same lines and on the same principle as is being done for Scheduled Castes.

Similarly, seats may be reserved for Scheduled Communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) in Block/Taluka panchayats and Zila Parishads on the same lines and on the same principle as is being done for scheduled Castes.

57. A large population of Scheduled Communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) is living in cities and towns all over the country. It is suggested that seats may be reserved in all the Urban local Bodies for scheduled Communities (SComs) on the same lines and on the same principle as is being done for Scheduled Castes to enable them to participate in the Democratic process.
58. Considering the Commission's recommendations for a separate DNT Sub Plan, a separate Ministry/Department at the Central Government level, a separate finance & Development Corporation for DNTs at the national level, additional resources will have to be provided in the Union Budget. In view of the continuing robust growth in the collection of Government revenues, it may not be difficult to provide support for the welfare schemes to be launched for DNTs. This will also hold good for the States/UTs.
59. To mobilise additional resources to improve the socio-economic conditions of DNTs, it is suggested that 10% of the funds earmarked for M.P. Local Area Development Fund may be spent on schemes and programmes involving creating of physical infrastructure for the welfare of DNTs. This may include construction of residential schools, hostels, vocational training centres, and purchase of land construction for DNTs. Similar arrangement may be made in respect of funds allocated to MLAs/MLCs in the States and Councillors in Urban Local Bodies.
60. It is a welcome development that the corporate world is increasingly undertaking various welfare projects for the benefit of the poor in the discharge of their Corporate Social Responsibility as a voluntary initiative. These projects include creation of facilities in the field of healthcare, insurance, education, vocational training and housing, etc., both in rural and urban areas. This may be a major source of non-governmental assistance which can be channelised for the welfare of DNTs in various parts of the country. It is suggested that the Union and State Government may proactively encourage and motivate the growing private sector to take their support and cooperation to undertake need based projects for the welfare of DNTs in particular.

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61. If the resources still fall short of the requirement to fund the welfare schemes and programmes for the DNTs, the Union and the State Government/UTs may impose a suitable cess like the education cess for generating additional resources.
62. It is also suggested that the schemes and programmes for the welfare of DNT's may preferably be implemented on Public Private Partnership basis as far as possible. This will not only reduce the financial burden of the Government, but will also help in raising the efficiency of the delivery system to maximize the impact of welfare schemes for DNTs.
63. Nomadic Tribes are communities living unsettled over generation. However, times have changed and the communities have reached a dead end, where they cannot continue with their wandering life style any more. The vanishing common property rights, improvement in infrastructure in the communication systems and media have made the whole world a small village and has thrown these communities out of gear since they are not able to continue with their traditional sources of livelihood.

In order to provide sustainable livelihood to these completely asset less people, top priority should be given to create new settlements where activities like housing, education and creation of the source of income will be started simultaneously. For this purpose, they should be settled on Government lands lying idle or on lands to be acquired by the Government. The Government should immediately bring into effect a 'Right to Minimum Land Holding Act' according to which each Nomadic family (of not more than five persons, larger families getting more allocation in that proportion) may be allotted at least one acre of cultivable land on nominal lease basis with assured irrigation.

Such assets may be allotted to SHGs of Nomadic Tribes in a pooled manner for those who want to engage themselves in agro or primary food production activities, on a non-transferable basis so that the group together can create sustainable assets on the land, on a scientific basis, with proper training.

64. It is also suggested that the allotment of houses or plots or agricultural land may be allotted to DNTs on the condition that the allottees will not be able to transfer the house, plot or agricultural land to any person.
65. Since education is the cornerstone for the upliftment of DNTs, the Ministry of HRD may earmark separate outlay for the DNTs for the XI Five-Year Plan and monitor its utilization accordingly. This will ensure focused attention of the Government on the education of DNTs and the required flow of funds therefor.
66. Presently, SCs, STs and OBC, are enjoying the benefit of reservation in Government jobs. While some of the Scheduled Communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) being in the lists of SCs, STs and OBCs are also eligible for such reservation, in effect, they are getting virtually no benefit as the comparatively better off and dominant castes in these lists take

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almost the entire benefit of reservation. In order to enable the Scheduled Communities (Denotified and Nomadic Tribes) To enjoy the benefit of reservation, a separate percentage of reservation in Government jobs needs to be given to them on the same lines and on the same principle as is being given to SCs and STs. It is estimated that their population is more than ten crores. In view of this, it is suggested that the Scheduled Communities be given 10% reservation in Government jobs even if the total reservation exceeds 50% as an integral part of the Affirmative Action programme for the Socio-economic upliftment of these communities.

67. During its visit to the States of Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Commission found that Section 63 of the Bombay Tenancy of Agricultural Land Holding Act, 1948, inter alia, prohibits transfer of land to non-agriculturists. In view of this provision, a member of the Denotified or Nomadic Tribe who is not an agriculturist cannot purchase agricultural land for himself. Since most of the DNT are non-agriculturists, they are not able to purchase agricultural land for themselves. It is suggested that the State Governments may revisit such provisions and suitably amend the relevant provision to enable DNTs to purchase agricultural land for their livelihood support. Other States/UTs may also examine the relevant laws for a similar action.
68. The Commission also found that Rules regarding admission to Agriculture colleges in Maharashtra bar admission to Agriculture Colleges if the applicant is not an agriculturist. Therefore, if applicants belonging to DNTs apply for admission to Agriculture Colleges do not get admission as they are not agriculturists. This Rule appears to be unfair and need to be changed to enable DNT applicants, most of whom are non-agriculturists, to seek admission in the Agriculture Colleges in the State.
69. A major handicap in enabling DNTs to take advantage of various welfare schemes of the Central and State Governments is not only their ignorance about such schemes but also lack of initiative, confidence, courage and conviction due to their long standing social exclusion. In such a situation, the implementing Government agency at the grassroots needs to organise an aggressive sensitization campaign for them by visiting their settlements both in urban and rural areas familiarizing them about various welfare schemes and helping them in preparing their applications, etc., forwarded to the relevant authorities, and thus ensuring that the maximum number of such applicants get the benefits of the welfare schemes.
70. The Central and State Government/UTs may promote the setting up of a Community Service-cum-information Centre for DNTs through an NGO with the objective of helping DNTs needing guidance and counselling in the fields of education, health and employment. The Centre may be equipped with computers and latest literature on the relevant welfare schemes. Experts available at the Centre will especially guide DNT youth in choosing the career options, acquiring skills for self-employment and availing bank credit either individually or through Self Help Groups. The Centre may also be equipped with a toll free help-line.

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71. Since DNTs and particularly, nomadic tribes, live and wander in far flung areas, which are not easily accessible, it is suggested that suitable programmes regarding various welfare schemes being implemented by the Government are regularly broadcast in the local language from the nearest All India Radio Stations. This will enable them to familiarize themselves with various welfare schemes being implemented. Similarly, a weekly TV programme may also be introduced on the lines of Krishi Darshan by Doordarshan to sensitise and familiarize the DNTs living in the urban and semi-urban areas about various welfare schemes, etc., being implemented for them.
72. During its visit to various States, the Commission found that large-number of States (about seventeen) have set up Research Institutes for Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes which undertake research on various issues relating to SCs and STs as also the evaluation of impact of various welfare schemes relating to their socio-economic development. It is suggested that similar Research Institutes should be set up by the States/UTs for DNTs.
73. Considering the rich cultural heritage and the need to preserve, it, it is recommended that a multicultural complex/Academy may be set up in every State/UT to develop, preserve and exhibit the diverse and rich cultural heritage of DNTs. It will support and preserve arts, crafts music, dance, folk-lore and indigenous knowledge systems of DNTs for their further development.
74. The commission during its field visits observed that in the School leaving Certificates of some students belonging to the nomadic tribes, the name of the caste of the student was written as Beggar or Bhikshuk or Firaste (Wanderer), etc. It may be because the parents of such student being illiterate do not know how to fill up the enrolment form and therefore, they request either the teachers or someone else to do the same. In such cases the teachers/middle men write the name of caste of the students as per their own understanding and knowledge. The result is that it becomes very difficult for the students to get caste certificates from the competent authority on the basis of caste.

It is, therefore, recommended that name of the caste of the student (which was registered wrongly) should be corrected in the school records itself. For this a request/application to the concerned school should come from the concerned student, approved by his/her caste panchayat or general body of the community.

75. DNTs are and large assetless and jobless. To assist them economically, the following steps are recommended.
  - (1) Some communities (like Oddar, Od, Vadar, Beldar, etc.) have been traditionally associated with occupations related to lime work, digging earth, carrying sand, mining, quarrying, and so on. Presently in many States/UTs, a large number of these people are engaged in construction industry as unorganized labourers in carrying, loading and unloading of sand, cutting and crushing stones, etc. It is suggested that

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the State/UT Government Societies of these people and provide the above said jobs to their Self Help Groups and cooperatives on contract basis so that the concerned communities are assured of a sustained living.

- (ii) A large number of DNTs are engaged in rag picking in cities and towns and are living in extremely unhygienic conditions with no knowledge and understanding of the aspects of safety in their jobs. It is suggested that the State/UT Governments may make arrangements to ensure safety and health of these people while they are in their occupations dealing with hazardous waste material as a part of their occupation. It is also suggested that those who are engaged in collecting solid waste material may be given training in waste recycling process and provided with support and assistance to set up waste-recycling process and provided with support and assistance to set up waste-recycling plants/units. The State Governments/UTs may also provide access to the solid wastes to their SHGs and Cooperatives free of charge.

It is further suggested that the waste paper from Government offices may be sold to the SHGs or Cooperatives of The DNT communities through negotiation and not through Tender.

- (iii) It has been observed that there are unused Government lands along the banks of rivers, ponds, dams, etc. Similarly, lands along the highways are lying idle. It is suggested that such lands may be allotted to DNTs on lease basis to enable them to grow crops, vegetables, plants and flowers and herbs, etc.

76. As stated earlier, a number of castes/communities form amongst the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes have been included in the lists of SCs, STs, and OBCs from time to time. It has been noticed that in many cases the same caste/community has been included in the list of SCs in one or more States, and the same caste/community has been included in the lists of STs or OBCs in some other States and has not been included in any list at all in some States. Similarly, a caste/community has been included in one list in some Districts of the State and in another list in some other Districts and in no list in the remaining Districts. This is not only unreasonable but also discriminatory and iniquitous and has created anger and dissatisfaction among various castes/communities in the country. Such examples have been referred to in the chapter in ‘Anomalies’. It is therefore, strongly recommended that all such anomalies be identified and corrected to ensure that a caste/community is in the same list in all States and also within the same State.

It has also been noticed that various Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes have been identified district-wise in the same State. This is also unreasonable. In an age of occupational mobility, if a family moves from one district to another, it should not mean a loss of status of that family. A typical example of this is the State of U.P. It is, therefore, recommended that narrow area restrictions be removed forthwith and castes/communities ordinarily be allowed to enjoy the same status throughout the State.

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**Annexure-4**

NATIONAL COMMISSION  
FOR  
DENOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC TRIBES  
(MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)  
REPORT

VOLUME - I  
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Chapter 7  
Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- Population

As said earlier, South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that 7% of India's population is nomadic<sup>2</sup> and consists of five hundred different communities. In addition, there are a large number of denotified communities as well. The last caste-wise census in India was done in 1931. However, this census does not include all the denotified and nomadic tribes. Moreover, 1931 census is about 80 years old. Some rough estimates quoted by the participants in various seminars, etc., are 10 to 15 crores. In order to work out the most realistic estimate of the population of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes in India, the Commission undertook a detailed exercise through its Research Division.

**Methodology**

In order to work out the population of Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic Tribes, the Commission divided their total population in the following three categories:-

1. Denotified Tribes who are listed as SCs and STs in various States, i.e., Denotified (SC/ST);
2. Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes who have been included in the list of SCs and STs, i.e., Nomadic (SC/ST); and
3. Nomadic Tribes which have been included in the list of OBCs from time to time, i.e., Nomadic (OBC).

1. Calculation of population of Denotified Communities (SC/ST) The following procedure was followed for calculating Category 1.

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- The list of Denotified Tribes provided by 15 States has been prepared.
- The Communities included in this list were categorised into SC/ST/OBC.
- Thus the population of Denotified Tribes who fall in the category of SC/ST has been worked out on the basis of Census 2001.
- Thus the total of the 1st category i.e. Denotified (SC/ST) for 15 States works out to 1, 36, 05,034 (See Annexure 12).

#### 2: Calculation of population of Nomadic (SC/ST) other than the Denotified

The following procedure was followed for this calculation:

For calculating the population for category 2, the population of all those communities which fall in the category of SC/ST in the following lists was worked out :

1. Lists of Nomadic communities provided by the States
  2. Lists of Nomadic communities prepared by the Commission
- Adding (1) & (2) a State-wise master list of nomadic communities (SC/ST) was prepared. In this master list, under a single serial number, different spellings of the name of the community as well as its synonyms were incorporated to make sure that a community appears only once under a single serial number and its population is counted only once.
  - This becomes the Nomadic (SC/ST) list for the purpose of category (2) population only. It may be noted that this is not a list of all Nomadic communities which fall in SC/ST categories as Nomadic (Denotified) communities falling in SC/ST category have been counted in category 1.

Note: While calculating the population figures of Nomadic communities (SC/ST) minus the Denotified communities, it was found that the names of certain communities appear in both category 2 and category 3. This is because sometimes a community is listed as OBC in a certain State, and as SC or ST in another State.

A procedure for avoiding double counting of such communities was adopted, which is as follows:

- The overlapping communities between Nomadic (OBC) and Nomadic (SC/ST) were identified.
- If their population was available in the document provided by National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), they were counted in the Nomadic (OBC) population.

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- Communities whose names were not found in the NCBC document, their population was taken from the 2001 Census and counted in the Nomadic (SC/ST) population.
- The above procedure ensured that these communities were counted only once.

The total Nomadic (SC/ST) population worked out to 4, 49, 59,058 approx. (See Annexure 13).

Category 3: Calculation of Nomadic (OBC) population minus Denotified Communities

The following procedure was followed:

- A master list of Nomadic communities falling in the OBC category was prepared from the following two lists:
- The lists of Nomadic communities provided by the States
- The State-wise lists of Nomadic communities prepared by the Commission
- In this master list, under a single serial number, different spellings of the name of the community as well as its synonyms (as appearing in the two lists) were incorporated. It was done to make sure that a community appeared only once under a single serial number and got counted only once.
- Denotified communities’ list was excluded while preparing the master list because Denotified communities had already been counted in Category 1.
- This becomes the Nomadic communities’ (OBC) list minus the Denotified. It may be noted that this master list is not an exhaustive Nomadic (OBC) list, i.e., it is not a list of all Nomadic communities falling in the category of OBCs. The Denotified OBCs had been removed from here. This list was made only for the purpose of calculation of population of Category 3.
- The all India Nomadic (OBC) population was calculated from the figures based on 1931 Census compiled in a document provided by the NCBC. In this document, it was found that 1951 projections of population of various communities were extrapolated from the 1931 census. These 1951 figures were taken for Nomadic communities which are today OBC, for further extrapolation to 2001. The total population of Nomadic communities’ (OBC) without extrapolation as in 1951 worked out to 1, 71, 77,138 (See Annexure 14).

Thus, we have population figures of 1951 for both Nomadic communities (OBC) and all-India, while the Nomadic (OBC) population figures for 2001 are not available. Hence, we have calculated the estimated Nomadic (OBC) population of 2001 based on the proportional share of Nomadic communities (OBC) in 1951.



## Study Report

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Step I:

$$\frac{\text{Nomadic population (NP)}}{\text{Total population (TP)}} \times 100 = \text{Proportion of NP to TP}$$

$$\frac{17177138}{361088090} \times 100 = 4.76\%$$

Step II:

$$\frac{\text{TP of 2001}}{100} \times \text{Proportion of NP to TP of 1951} = \text{Estimated population}$$

$$\frac{1027015247}{100} \times 4.76 = 4,88,85,926$$

It is important to note that in 1951 Census population figures are available only for 91 Nomadic communities (OBC).

Total DNT and NT Population in 2001 (Category 1 + 2 + 3):

DNT (SC & ST) 2001 Population	=	1, 36, 05,034
Nomadic (SC & ST) 2001 Population	=	4, 49, 59,058
Nomadic (OBC) 2001 Estimated Population	=	4, 88, 85,926
TOTAL	=	10, 74, 50,018

Note: Information about 123 Nomadic communities (OBC) is not available. Similarly, no information is available about 104 nomadic communities which are outside the categories of reservation.

Limitations of calculating Denotified population

- The population of Denotified communities which has been calculated is only
- partial as only 15 States had provided the lists of Denotified communities.
- Inability to calculate and include the population of Denotified (OBC), i.e., those Denotified communities which fall in the OBC today:

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The document provided by the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) contains extrapolated 1951 population figures for those communities which were counted in the 1931 census. Some of those communities are Denotified (OBC) today. However, the population figures available for them are erstwhile Province-wise. A Denotified community of a particular region cannot be taken as a Denotified for the whole Province or for the entire country. A particular Denotified community's population should be counted only from the particular region where they were originally notified and denotified. For this reason, those Denotified communities which fall in the category of OBC could not be counted and their population does not form part of the calculations.

- In large States, like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, all Denotified communities are found to be OBC. All these communities could not be counted for the reason explained above.

#### Limitations of calculation of Nomadic (OBC) population

- The projection for the Nomadic communities (OBC) figures is partial because all the States did not send the lists of Nomadic communities. Only ten States sent their lists.
- The names of 123 communities in the NCBC document were such against which no population figures were available.
- There were also communities which were not included in 1931-Census, and therefore their population is missing from the projection.
- For some communities, e.g. Vasudev or Gondali, very small population had been shown whereas it is known from other recorded sources that these communities are much larger in number.

#### Limitations in calculating Nomadic (SC/ST) population

- The major limitation here again was that only ten States sent lists of Nomadic communities. In spite of identifying a large number of new Nomadic communities in the State-wise Nomadic communities' lists prepared by the Commission, all Nomadic communities could not be identified and counted.

#### Conclusion

In view of the aforesaid limitations the population of a number of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes could not be taken into account in working out the projections. In spite of this, it is the Commission's view that the population of Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-nomadic Tribes in the country can safely be assumed to be more than One Hundred Million. However, to have an authentic estimate of their population, it is desirable that their population is enumerated in the forthcoming Census-2011 to enable the Union and the States to design and implement welfare schemes in accordance with their population.