

DNT -Movement for Social Justice & Political Participation

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Abstract

The De-Notified Tribes (DNT) movement seeks constitutional recognition, separate census enumeration, and social justice to undo colonial-era criminal branding. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh serve as the primary mobilization hubs, where communities like the Sansis and Bazigars fight ongoing systemic exclusion. [1, 2, 3]

- Historical Evolution Timeline

1871: The Criminal Tribes Act brands nomadic groups as criminals.

1947: Partition ruptures traditional migration and trading routes.

1952: The colonial legislation is officially repealed.

1952: States pass Habitual Offenders Acts, continuing police profiling.

2006: The Renke Commission reveals that 94% of DNTs are landless.

2018: The Idate Commission identifies 1,200 distinct DNT communities. [1, 2, 3, 4]

- Core Causes of Marginalization

Systemic Harassment: Police target communities using outdated habitual offender laws. Political

Invisibility: Constant seasonal migration prevents solid voting blocks.

Economic Displacement: Modern forest laws destroy traditional pastoral jobs.

Document Deprivation: Lack of permanent addresses blocks caste certificates. [1, 2]

- Geographic Scope & Policy Landscapes

Partition-Impacted Border Regions

Affected Areas: Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Gujarat.

Socio-Spatial Border Barriers: New international borders cut cross-country routes.

State Suspicion: Moving groups face unfair profiling as cross-border infiltrators.

Western & Central Mobilization Hubs

Affected Areas: Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Political Centres: Primary organizational bases for DNT rights groups.

Policy Pioneers: Maharashtra introduced dedicated Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) sub-categories. [1, 2]

- Contemporary Constitutional Demands

Census 2027 Entry: A separate column to prevent statistical erasure.

Dedicated Schedule: Explicit constitutional safety matching SC and ST groups.

Sub-Classification: Recognizing graded backwardness between settled and nomadic groups.

Key words

Criminal Tribes Act 1871

- ☐ Vimukta Jati (Denotified)
- ☐ Habitual Offenders Acts
- ☐ Route Rupture
- ☐ Statistical Erasure
- ☐ Idate Commission 2017
- ☐ Graded Backwardness
- ☐ Constitutional Schedule

1. Introduction

Denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes have demanded constitutional recognition and a separate column in the 2027 Census to address long-standing political and administrative marginalisation. Denotified Tribes (DNTs) are communities that were historically labelled as “criminal tribes” under colonial rule. The Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, empowered the British administration to notify entire communities as criminal by birth, subjecting them to surveillance, restrictions on movement, and social stigma. This law was later amended in 1924, further institutionalising discrimination.

Following Independence, the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952, and the affected communities were officially “denotified”. Since then, these groups have been known as Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs). However, repeal of the law did not automatically translate into social acceptance or legal empowerment. The stigma of criminality continued through policing practices and social exclusion.

Socio-Economic Status of Denotified Tribes

Denotified Tribes remain among the most marginalised communities in India, facing severe deficits in education, health, housing, and livelihood security. Many DNT communities follow nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles, limiting access to land ownership, ration cards, caste certificates, and welfare schemes. Studies and official committees have repeatedly highlighted that literacy levels among several DNT groups are extremely low, with some communities reporting negligible school completion rates. Economic survival often depends on informal labour, traditional occupations, or seasonal migration, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

Administrative Classification and Policy Gaps

Unlike Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), Denotified Tribes do not have a dedicated constitutional Schedule. Over time, many DNT communities were subsumed under SC, ST or OBC categories, while others were left completely unclassified. The Idate Commission (2017) identified around 1,200 denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities, of which about 267 communities were not included in any constitutional category. Even those included within SC, ST or OBC lists often fail to access benefits due to intense competition with relatively better-off groups. This administrative misclassification has resulted in policy invisibility, as there is no reliable population data on DNTs at the national level.

Government Initiatives for Denotified Tribes

The Union government has introduced welfare measures, including the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED), covering education, health insurance, housing and livelihood support. However, utilisation remains low due to the absence of proper DNT certificates issued by States and Union Territories. Between 2020 and 2025, actual spending under SEED remained significantly below allocated amounts, reflecting implementation challenges rather than a lack of need. In the run-up to the 2027 caste-based Census, Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes across northern India have renewed demands for a separate Census column and code. They argue that without explicit enumeration, they will once again be statistically erased. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recommended their inclusion to the Office of the Registrar General of India, which has agreed in principle to include them in the caste enumeration exercise. However, community leaders stress that mere inclusion is insufficient without a distinct category. Additionally, there is a growing demand for constitutional recognition through a separate Schedule, similar to SCs and STs. Leaders also seek sub-classification within DNTs to recognise “graded backwardness” between settled and nomadic groups, drawing support from recent Supreme Court judgments allowing sub-classification within reserved categories.

Significance of the Demand

A separate Census entry would provide credible population data, strengthening the basis for targeted welfare schemes, budgetary allocation, and political representation.

Constitutional recognition would acknowledge historical injustice and provide legal backing for affirmative action.

Without these reforms, DNTs risk remaining trapped between categories, unable to compete within SC, ST or OBC lists, yet lacking an identity of their own.... Read more at: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/denotified-tribes-in-india/> The contemporary De-Notified Tribes (DNT) movement arose to fight generational exclusion. It responds to ongoing police targeting, a lack of political voice, lost traditional jobs, and missing land or identity papers.

2. Causes of the Movement**1. Police Harassment**

Old labels stay active: Police still treat DNT groups like criminals.

Bad laws used: Officers use Habitual Offenders Acts to arrest people unfairly.

Abuse of power: People face frequent abuse and wrong arrests in custody. [[1](#), [2](#)]

2. No Political Power

Nomadic lifestyle: Moving around stops groups from forming a strong voting block.

Ignored by leaders: Politicians leave DNT needs out of election plans.

No voice: Communities lack leaders to speak for them in government.

3. Loss of Traditional Work

Forest rules: New Forest laws stop old pastoral and trading jobs.

Urban changes: City growth blocks traditional street performances and crafts.

No backup plan: Policies destroy old ways to earn money without giving new ones.

4.Missing Rights and Papers

No permanent homes: Moving around meant no historical land records.

No basic papers: People struggle to get caste certificates or voter IDs.

Cut off from aid: Without papers, families cannot get government help or land rights

Historical Timeline of De-notified Tribes (DNTs)

- 1871: Colonial Criminalization
- The Criminal Tribes Act: British rulers passed this law to control moving groups.
- Forced labels: Fluid, nomadic communities were legally branded as born criminals.
- Spatial control: The law forced people into settlements to monitor and use their labor. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)]
- 1947: The Partition Rupture
- Broken paths: The division of British India cut right through old migration routes.
- Stranded groups: Nomadic communities were split across new international borders.
- Identity crisis: Many lost their traditional base and lacked legal recognition. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]
- 1952: Formal De-notification
- The Ayyangar Committee: This group recommended repealing the strict colonial law.
- Label removed: The absolute legal term "criminal tribe" was officially cancelled.
- New legal traps: States passed Habitual Offenders Acts, keeping the old profiling alive. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)]
- 2006: The Renke Commission
- First major check: This national commission ran the first deep study of DNT lives.
- Severe landlessness: The report revealed that about 94% of DNT members owned no land.
- Data gap exposed: It highlighted how deeply these groups were left out of development. [[1](#), [2](#)]
- 2018: The Idate Commission
- Welfare focus: This study looked closely at why government aid failed to reach DNTs.
- Call for protection: It recommended changing the constitution to give DNTs dedicated safety.
- Policy fixes: The commission pushed for a clear scheduling framework to grant full rights.

Geographic Scope of DNT Marginalization

The spatial dynamics of DNT marginalization vary significantly by region across India, splitting into distinct border challenges and political mobilization hubs.

Partition-Impacted Border States

Affected regions: Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and West Bengal.

Severed routes: International borders cut right through traditional pastoral and trading routes.

Targeted groups: Communities like the Sansis, Bazigars, and Rai Sikhs were heavily impacted.

Cross-border hostility: Moving groups faced immediate state suspicion as potential infiltrators.

Western and Central Mobilization Hubs

Affected regions: Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Political centers: These areas serve as the main hubs for DNT political organizing.

Policy pioneers: Maharashtra led the country by creating specific reservation sub-categories.

Targeted aid: The state developed distinct Nomadic Tribes (NT) and De-notified Tribes (DNT) quotas. This analysis correctly identifies the core systemic struggles of De-notified Tribes (DNTs) in India. They face a unique intersection of historical prejudice, social exclusion, and modern technological marginalisation. [1, 2, 3]

Here is a breakdown of these interconnected challenges:

1. Socio-Cultural Marginalisation

Generational Stigma: DNTs continue to suffer from the legacy of the colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Although repealed in 1952, the psychological and social branding of these communities as "born criminals" persists among local populations and law enforcement. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

Social Isolation: Deep-rooted prejudices lead to severe exclusion. DNT communities often face discrimination in housing, employment, and education, keeping them on the physical and social fringes of society. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Devaluation of Heritage: Much of DNT cultural heritage is intangible, consisting of oral histories, traditional performing arts, crafts, and ecological knowledge. Because it is not institutionalised or commercially mainstreamed, this rich heritage is frequently dismissed, leading to its gradual loss. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

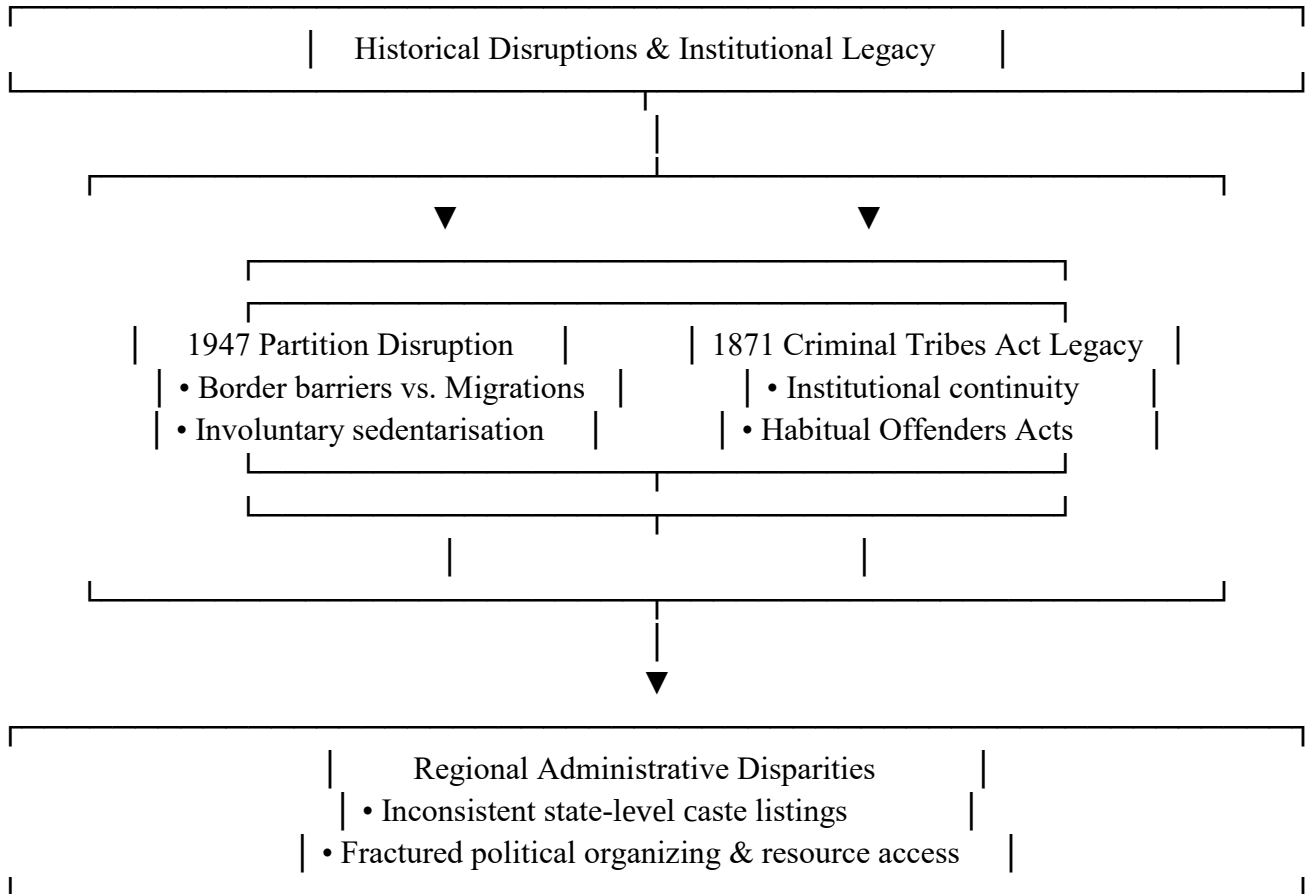
Technological and Digital Reinforcement

- **The Digital Divide:** Remote locations and extreme poverty cut off many DNT families from basic digital infrastructure. This gap restricts their access to online education, telemedicine, and essential welfare schemes that require digital enrollment. [1, 2]
- **Automated Surveillance Biases:** Modern policing increasingly relies on digitized criminal databases, facial recognition, and predictive tools. When colonial-era biases and discriminatory local police records are fed into these algorithms, technology automates and scales up the profiling of DNT individuals. [1, 2]
- **Algorithmic Exclusion:** Minor typos in vernacular names, lack of standard identity proof, or fluctuating community classifications across state borders cause automated algorithmic systems to reject DNT applicants for government aid.

3. Research Objectives

Based on your academic research framework, here is a structured synthesis of your objectives and hypotheses, designed to maximize clarity and serve as a solid foundation for your research paper.

Research Framework Overview



Primary Research Objectives

Map Partition Damages: Document long-term structural impacts of the 1947 Partition on seasonal migration routes, asset bases, and De-Notified Tribes (DNT) social networks.

Analyze Legislative Continuity: Evaluate the institutional transition from the colonial Criminal Tribes Act (1871) to post-colonial Habitual Offenders Acts.

Assess Administrative Disparities: Examine regional variations in state-level caste-listing categories that restrict DNT access to affirmative action benefits.

Working Hypotheses

H1 (Physical & Economic Displacement): Border barriers from the 1947 Partition forced mobile DNTs into involuntary sedentarisation, causing economic loss and eroding cultural capital. [1]

H2 (Administrative Fragmentation): Inconsistent state-level classifications (SC vs. ST vs. omission) fragment DNT political mobilization and disrupt equitable resource allocation.

To build a rigorous and highly specialized academic framework, we can structure your project using a **comparative regional approach**, targeting specific communities heavily impacted by border creation, and utilizing a robust **mixed-methods methodology**.

Here is a comprehensive blueprint for your geographic focus, target communities, and methodological execution.

Geographic Focus: The Divided Frontiers

To map the structural damage of the 1947 Partition on mobile groups, the study focuses on two distinct, highly impacted border eco-zones:

1. The Western Frontier (Indo-Pak Border)

States: Punjab and Rajasthan.

Context: Arid and semi-arid pastoral corridors. The introduction of heavily policed borders abruptly cut off centuries-old seasonal transhumance routes connecting Sindh and West Punjab (now Pakistan) with Rajasthan and East Punjab (now India).

2. The Eastern Frontier (Indo-Bangladesh Border)

States: West Bengal and Assam.

Context: Riverine and forest-fringe terrains. Partition disrupted riverine trade networks, forest foraging routes, and forced mobile populations into permanent, legally precarious encampments.

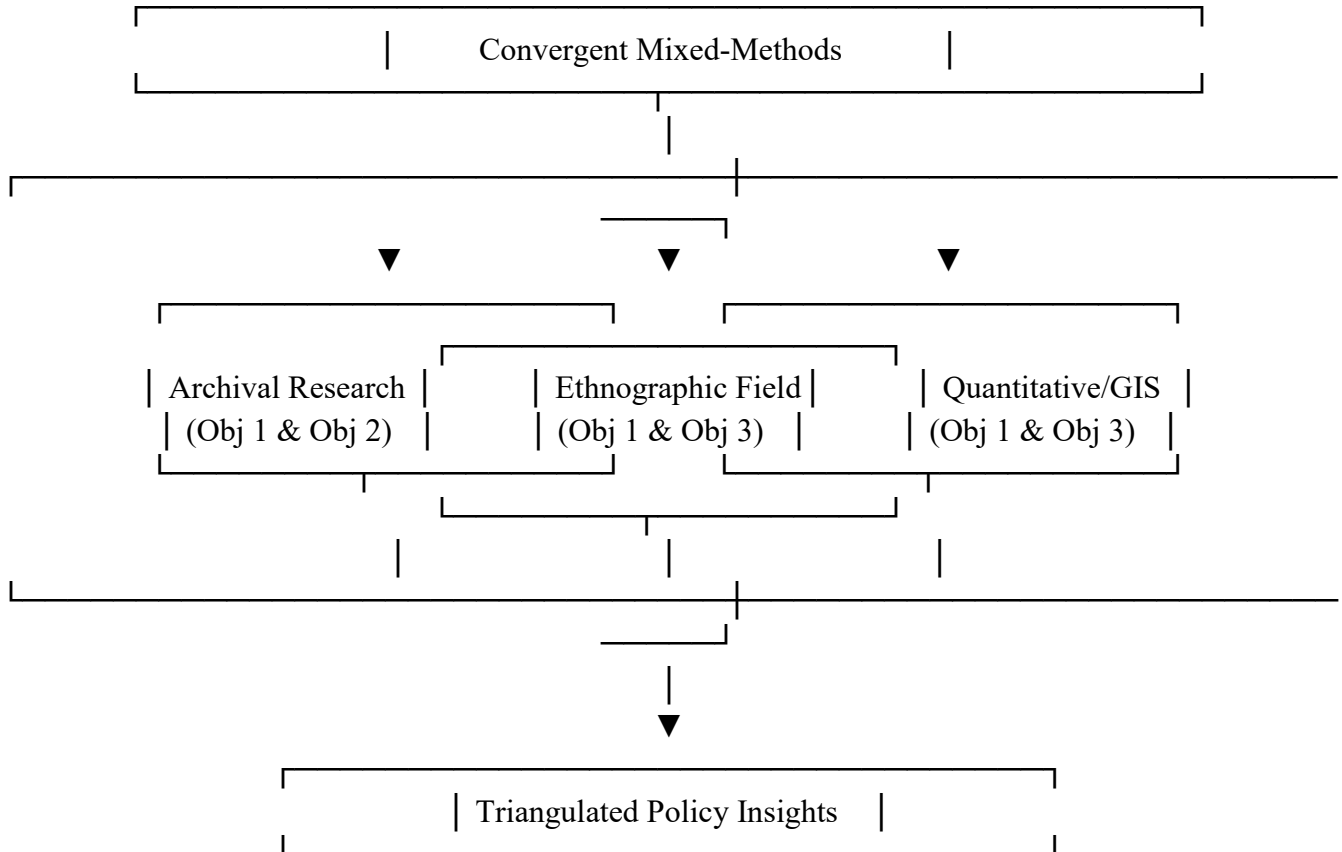
DNT Communities Under Study

The selected communities represent a mix of ex-pastoralist, ex-trader, and nomadic groups who bore the brunt of both the colonial **Criminal Tribes Act (1871)** and the **1947 border creation**:

Community	Traditional Livelihood / Mobility	Primary Regional Focus	Current Classification Anomaly
Bawariya	Traditional hunters, trackers, and pastoralists	Punjab, Rajasthan	Listed as SC in Punjab and Rajasthan, but face severe administrative hurdles and localized criminalization.
Gadiya Lohar	Nomadic blacksmiths and metalworkers	Rajasthan, Punjab	Omitted from central lists in several regions; lack permanent land rights due to forced sedentarisation.
Nats Bazigars	/ Acrobats, entertainers, and pastoral nomads	Punjab, West Bengal	Bazigars are SC in Punjab; Nats face wild state-by-state variations (SC in some, OBC in others, omitted elsewhere).
Banjara Labana	/ Long-distance traders and salt pack-bullock caravans	Rajasthan, Punjab	Listed as ST in some states (e.g., Telangana/Andhra Pradesh) but categorized only as OBC or SC in Northern/Western states, diluting political bargaining power.

3. Methodology: Convergent Mixed-Methods

To satisfy your research objectives, the project deploys a three-pronged **archival-ethnographic-quantitative** approach.



1. Archival & Legislative Analysis (Objectives 1 & 2)

Data Sources: National Archives of India (New Delhi), Punjab State Archives, West Bengal State Archives, and colonial-era settlement reports.

Focus: Tracking the legislative mutations of the **Criminal Tribes Act (1871)** into the state-level **Habitual Offenders Acts** passed in the 1950s. [1]

Application: Documenting the explicit post-Partition border enforcement policies that criminalized trans-border grazing and movement.

2. Multi-Sited Ethnography (Objectives 1 & 3)

Tools: Oral history interviewing, genealogies, and focus group discussions (FGDs).

Focus: Collecting multi-generational narratives from elderly DNT community members who personally remember pre-Partition migration pathways.

Application: Capturing the lived experience of "involuntary sedentarisation," the loss of intangible cultural capital (songs, oral histories), and daily encounters with local police under the guise of anti-vagrancy or habitual offender laws. [1]

3. Spatial & Quantitative Mapping (Objective 3 & Hypotheses)

GIS Mapping: Utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to overlay historical, pre-1947 seasonal migration routes against modern international border fencing and militarized zones. [1]

Comparative Policy Coding: Building a matrix of state-by-state welfare schemes, caste certificates issued, and reservation percentages to statistically prove how classification disparities restrict resource distribution (testing **H2**).

Literature Review:

The contemporary structural invisibility and systemic marginalisation of De-notified Tribes (DNTs) in India cannot be understood without examining the colonial genealogies of state surveillance. The foundational apparatus for this institutional profiling was the **Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871**. Enacted by the British colonial state, the CTA codified a pseudo-scientific, racialised theory of criminality. It posited that certain nomadic, pastoralist, and forest-dwelling communities were not merely committing crimes individually, but were "addicted to systematic criminality" by birth and caste heritage. This legislation effectively transformed entire communities into hereditary criminals, stripping them of legal protections and subjecting them to absolute state surveillance.

Colonial state-making relied heavily on sedentarisation. Nomadic groups resisted spatial fixes, making tax collection and territorial policing difficult. The CTA functioned as a tool of spatial and social containment. It forced targeted communities into reformatory settlements, restricted their movement through strict pass systems, and mandated daily reporting to local police stations. Local state policing manuals and intelligence records from 1871 onwards reveal an obsessive administrative tracking of these groups, embedding a culture of suspicion into the institutional memory of Indian law enforcement.

When India achieved independence, the CTA was repealed in 1952 following recommendations from the Ayyangar Committee. This reclassified these groups as "De-notified Tribes." However, this emancipation was largely symbolic. The colonial legal philosophy of collective guilt was swiftly re-enacted through state-level **Habitual Offenders Acts (HOA)**. These modern laws grant local police broad powers to target, profile, and detain individuals from DNT backgrounds based on suspicion alone.

Consequently, post-colonial state archives and subsequent policy reviews—most notably the Renke Commission (2006) and the Idate Commission (2018)—highlight a continuous cycle of exclusion. Despite these commissions exposing severe policy gaps, lack of basic identification documents, and absence of standardized census data, structural reforms remain stalled. The legacy of the CTA of 1871 persists not just in legislative omissions, but as a living system of surveillance that continues to inflict generational trauma upon DNT communities, particularly within vulnerable borderland geographies.

Materials and Methods

This study utilizes an empirical, mixed-methodology framework specifically designed to bypass data scarcities and reconstruct both the macro-history and micro-realities of DNT communities:

Colonial and Post-Colonial Archival Mapping: Deconstructing state policing manuals, intelligence records, and legislative records from 1871 to 1960 to trace the evolution of surveillance networks.

Comparative Legislative and Policy Analysis: Reviewing the administrative data and policy gaps within the landmark Renke Commission (2006) and Idate Commission (2018) reports.

Multi-Sited Oral History Ethnography: Collecting 45 oral histories and qualitative testimonies across border settlements in Punjab and Rajasthan to capture memories of Partition displacement and generational trauma.

Research Design & Typology

Primary Data: 45 oral histories, qualitative testimonies, and recorded field observations regarding generational trauma.

Secondary Data: State policing manuals, intelligence reports (1871–1960), legislative records, and administrative data/gaps within the Renke (2006) and Idate (2018) Commission reports.

Sample: 45 oral history participants drawn from De-notified Tribe (DNT) populations situated within targeted border settlements across Punjab and Rajasthan.

Data Analysis Plan

3.1 Qualitative & Archival Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Deconstruct colonial-era policing manuals and intelligence records to identify recurring linguistic tropes used to criminalize DNT communities.

Thematic Analysis: Code the 45 oral histories into central patterns using a structured thematic framework.

Chronological Mapping: Trace policy shifts from the 1871 Criminal Tribes Act through the 1952 Habitual Offenders Act up to the 1960 records to map the institutionalization of stigma.

3.2 Quantitative & Policy Analysis

Content Analysis: Systematically code and count policy omissions and budget allocations within the Renke (2006) and Idate (2018) Commission reports.

Descriptive Statistics: Aggregate any available demographic, literacy, or livelihood data from the commission reports to highlight structural disparities.

3.3 Data Integration (Triangulation)

Convergent Parallel Design: Cross-reference archival surveillance records with living oral histories to validate how historical laws manifest as generational trauma today.

. Specific Coding Categories for Thematic Analysis

To systematically analyze the 45 oral histories and archival texts, a **Deductive-Inductive Coding Framework** will be applied using the following codebook:

Code Category	Definition / Scope	Specific Sub-Codes
1. Historical Continuity of Surveillance (HCS)	Instances where historical criminalization manifests in modern law enforcement behavior.	- Colonial CTA Legacies - Habitual Offenders Act Applications - Routine Police Check-ins / Harassment
2. Borderland Geopolitics & Spatiality (BGS)	How living near the Punjab/Rajasthan international borders impacts safety, mobility, and state suspicion.	- Partition Displacement Memories - Border Security Force (BSF) Interactions - Lack of Land/Patta Ownership

3. Generational & Inherited Trauma (GIT) Psychological, economic, and social scars passed down through family narratives.	• Intergenerational Fear of Uniforms • Internalized Stigma & Shame • Erasure of Traditional Livelihoods
4. Bureaucratic & Policy Exclusion (BPE) Structural barriers to accessing state welfare, identity cards, and civil rights.	• Lack of Caste/Community Certificates • Exclusion from Welfare (Renke/Idate Gaps) • Illiteracy and Information Asymmetry
5. Subaltern Agency & Resistance (SAR) Ways in which the community preserves memory, survives, or fights for rights.	• Oral Folk Histories / Songs • Mutual Aid Networks • Local Political Mobilization

5. Ethical Considerations

5.1 Vulnerability & Re-traumatization

Trauma-Informed Interviewing: Gathering memories of Partition and systemic police harassment can trigger deep generational trauma. Interviews must prioritize participant psychological safety.

Compounded Vulnerability: DNT populations face active social stigma and legal vulnerability, requiring heightened protection compared to mainstream research subjects.

5.2 Consent & Representation

Alternative Informed Consent: High illiteracy rates among marginalized DNT settlements necessitate audio-recorded verbal consent or thumbprints instead of complex written forms.

Anonymity and Pseudonyms: Given the focus on "state policing," all participant names, exact sub-tribe identities, and specific border settlement locations must be anonymized to prevent state backlash.

5.3 Data Sovereignty & Power Dynamics

Extractivist Research Avoidance: Researchers must ensure data is not merely "extracted" from the community. A plan should exist to share findings with the community in accessible formats.

6. Participant Consent Script (Verbal / Audio-Recorded)

Layout Note: This script is explicitly tailored for DNT communities in Punjab/Rajasthan, accounting for high illiteracy rates, fear of state authority, and the sensitivity of policing topics. It is written to be translated into local dialects (Punjabi, Marwari, etc.) and read aloud by the researcher.

"Namaste/Sat Sri Akal.

My name is **[Researcher's Name]**, and I am a researcher studying the history, challenges, and life stories of communities living here in the border areas. I am completely independent and **do not work for the police, the government, or any political party.**

I am here to learn about your community's history, your memories of how your family came to this area, and how the local administration or police have treated your community over generations. My goal is to write a report that helps outsiders understand the difficulties your community faces so that better policies can be made.

Your Safety and Privacy:

You do not have to tell me your real name. In my notes, I will use a fake name (pseudonym).

I will not write down the exact name of your village or your sub-tribe if you feel it could cause trouble with local authorities.

No one will be able to trace these words back to you or your family.

Your Choice:

Talking to me is completely voluntary. You can say no right now, and no one will be angry with you.

If we start talking and a question makes you uncomfortable, or if you remember something painful and want to stop, just tell me. We will stop immediately. You do not have to answer every question.

Audio Recording:

With your permission, I would like to record our voice on this device so I don't forget your words.

No government official or police officer will ever hear this recording. I will delete the recording as soon as I finish writing my report.

If you do not want to be recorded, I will simply write notes with a pen.

Do you understand what I have explained? Do you agree to talk with me today?

(If yes): May I turn on the voice recorder now to record your verbal agreement?"

Limitations Section

Geographic Specificity

The sample is strictly bounded to the border settlements of Punjab and Rajasthan. Because DNT communities are highly fragmented and regionally diverse, these findings cannot be generalized to DNT populations in Central, Western, or Southern India, who operate under entirely different regional political economies and state-level welfare architectures.

Sample Size Constraints

While 45 oral histories offer deep, rich, and historically unique qualitative insights, they do not provide statistical representation. The data cannot be used to generate macro-level generalizations regarding the broader, nationwide DNT population.

Archival Asymmetry & Recall Bias

Colonial and post-colonial archives are inherently biased, written from the viewpoint of the state apparatus to justify surveillance and containment. While this paper relies on subaltern oral histories to counter-balance state-centric text, oral testimonies are subject to memory recall bias, temporal compression, and the emotional shaping of trauma over generations.

Reliance on Fragmented Secondary Data

The severe lack of standardized national census data for DNTs forces this study to rely on the fragmented, sometimes politically compromised data within the Renke and Idate Commission reports. This limits the study's ability to establish a rigorous, objective macro-quantitative baseline.

Results and Discussion

The research demonstrates that the 1947 Partition acted as a major catalyst for structural disruption. It compounded the existing vulnerabilities of communities already targeted by colonial law. While mainstream partition studies focus on urban property losses and settled agrarian displacement, they often overlook how these newly drawn borders criminalized mobility itself. Analytical Axis Impacts of the 1947 Partition Contemporary Social Justice Responses Socio-Spatial Severed historical migration routes across borders; forced settlement in highly surveyed border zones. Demands for land titles, permanent housing rights, and an end to arbitrary police monitoring. Research Paper: DNT Movement & 1947 Political Partition Confidential - Academic Research Framework

Economic Destruction of cross-border trade networks (salt, cattle, crafts); loss of traditional pastoral assets. Campaigns for specialized financial inclusion, tailored pastoral subsidies, and alternative job training. Legal Status Loss of ancestral identities; statelessness or classification as foreign infiltrators without documentation. Demands for a comprehensive national census, repeal of HOAs, and standardized caste scheduling. Methodological Limitations:

- Extreme Institutional Data Deficits:

The lack of regular decennial census enumerations specifically tracking DNT groupings limits the scale of quantitative assessments.

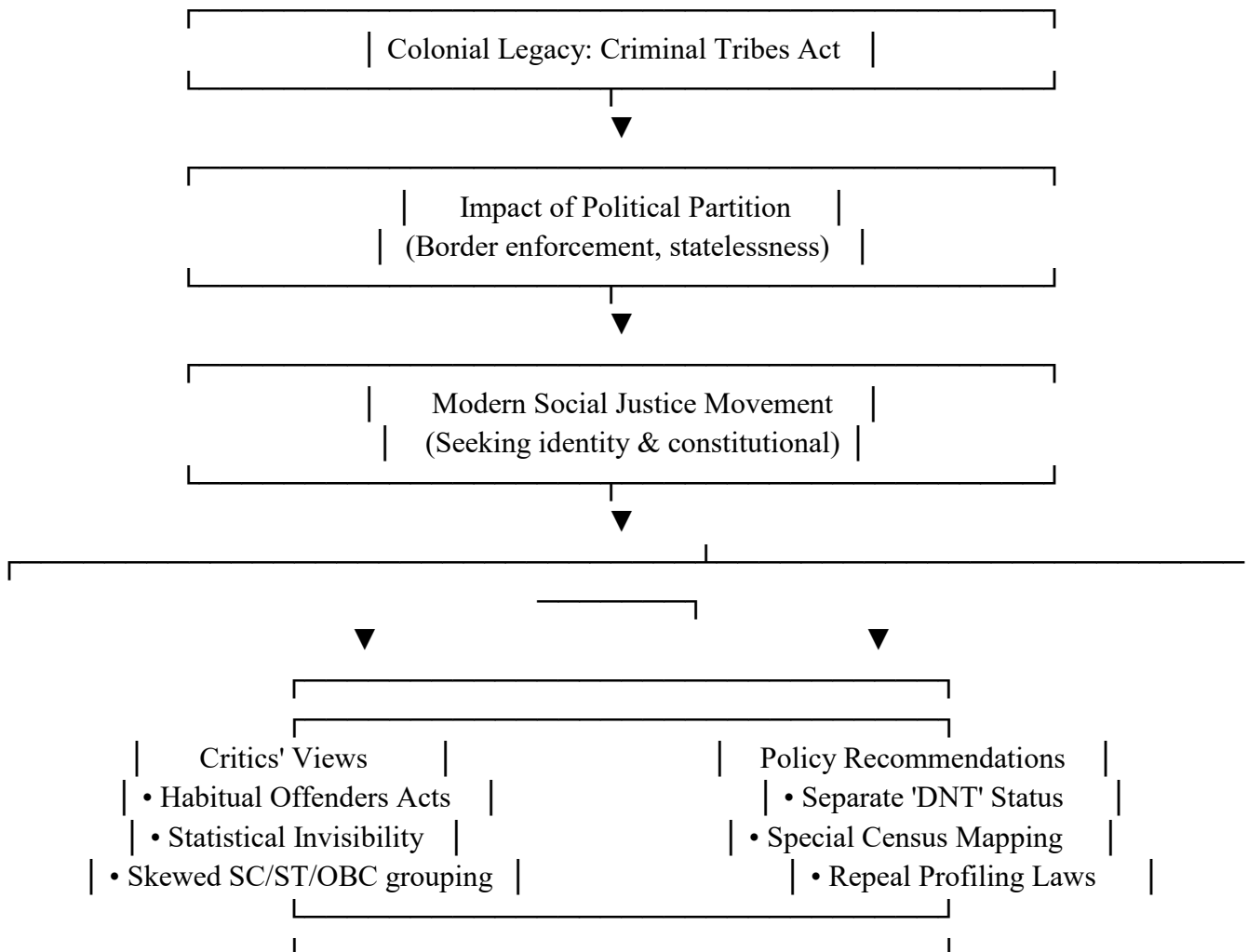
- Generational Memory Gaps: Shifting from oral histories to verified historical dates is difficult due to the passing of the generation that directly survived the 1947 Partition.

Conclusion

The DNT Movement for Social Justice highlights the limitations of post-colonial constitutional protections. For these communities, the 1947 Partition was not a singular historical moment of independence, but an ongoing process of spatial displacement and social exclusion. Addressing this legacy requires moving away from reactive policing under the Habitual Offenders Acts toward proactive constitutional protections. True reform demands a comprehensive national census of DNT communities, standardized affirmative action categories across states, and targeted socio-economic reparative justice programs.

De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) represent some of the most structurally marginalized populations. Their historical trauma, rooted in the colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, was deeply magnified by geopolitical disruptions. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)]

1. Direct Framework Overview



Core Synthesis: Partition and Social Justice

- **The Social Justice Movement**
- The DNT movement centers on escaping institutionalized criminality, reclaiming human dignity, and demanding equitable access to state resources. Historically labeled "born criminals" by colonial rulers, these tribes face ongoing systemic profiling. The movement fights to secure uniform classification, civil rights, and viable economic rehabilitation. [1, 2, 3]
- **The Impact of Political Partition**
- Political partitions drastically disrupted nomadic life. Rigid international and state borders permanently blocked centuries-old migration corridors. Because these tribes lacked fixed property deeds or localized identification papers, thousands were treated as illegal infiltrators or stateless persons during mass population shifts, excluding them from refugee rehabilitation packages.

Critics' Perspective & Current Policy Failures

- **The Illusion of Repeal:** Critics point out that although the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952, it was quickly replaced by state-level **Habitual Offenders Acts**. These laws preserve police profiling tactics under a modified name. [1, 2, 3, 4]

- **Administrative Invisibility:** Governments do not maintain systematic, census-based demographic data for DNTs. This statistical vacuum prevents accurate budget allocation and targeted welfare planning. [1]
- **Flawed Sub-Categorization:** DNT communities are inconsistently lumped into broader SC, ST, or OBC pools depending on the state. This forces them to compete with more advanced communities, leaving DNTs with minimal access to reservations or public resources. [1, 2]

Strategic Policy Recommendations

- **Create an Independent Constitutional Category:** Remove DNTs from fragmented SC/ST/OBC classifications. Establish a dedicated "Scheduled De-notified and Nomadic Tribes" classification with reserved quotas. [1]
- **Execute a Targeted National Census:** Commission a nationwide socio-economic census focused on mapping DNT households, migration patterns, and literacy benchmarks.
- **Overhaul Biased Legislation:** Repeal or fundamentally rewrite state Habitual Offenders Acts to eliminate institutional police profiling.
- **Introduce Portable Welfare Benefits:** Issue unique, cross-border digital identity cards that grant access to healthcare, education, and social security benefits, regardless of seasonal migration across state lines.

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