Panel wants

10% quota for nomadic tribes
Vikas Pathak
New Delhi, July 6

THERE SHOULD be a separate 10 per cent quota for 578 nomadic and semi-nomadic communities identified till now, says a government panel. Of these communities — clubbed together under the rubric of denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes — 474 are placed in the SC, ST or OBC cat-egories, but 104 have no benefits at all.
The panel has also called for a special drive to provide voter ID cards, ration cards, BPL cards and houses for these wandering groups. Denotified tribes are those communities that were notified by the British as criminal tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. This was re-pealed in 1952 and these communities were thus "denotified". The nomadic communities include pastoral nomadic communities, entertainers (ac-robats, dancers, snake-charmers, madaris), wildlife-related groups, artisan groups like the Gadia Lohars, and the banjaras.
Sources in the National
Commission for Denotified,
Nomadic and Semi-no-
madic Tribes said: "Our ex-
trapolations on the 1931
census put the population
of these communities at
10.75 crore. We have thus
demanded 10 per cent quota
for them. We have also
asked the government to
take those among them al-
ready in the SC, ST and
OBC categories out of these quotas and place them in the separate 10 per cent quota so that they are not swamped out by the better-off groups there."
The Commission's report — submitted to So-cial Justice and Empowerment Minister Meira Kumar — has also demanded a special drive to provide voter ID cards and ration cards to people of these groups. "About 98 per cent of these peo-ple are landless and homeless. Many have no proof of Indian citizenship and no permanent address," said a source.
The report has also demanded a separate cen-sus of these communities, a separate Indira Awas Yojana to build homes for them and the ex-tension of the SC and ST Atrocities Act to to pro-vide them security against victimisation. It has also called for a separate ministry for these groups, an advisory committee for them in each district and the extension of enquiry and super-vision powers to the Commission.
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