



# Tribal Surveillance in MP

## Why in News?

**Forest rights activists and lawyers** across the country **criticized the Madhya Pradesh government** for issuing a **discriminatory executive order against tribal and forest dwellers**, allowing search and surveillance of 'infamous hunting communities' in various forest circles.

## Key Points

- **Order Lacks Legal Basis:**
  - A forest rights activist called **the order draconian** and stated that it lacks any legal foundation.
  - He highlighted that the British colonial administration had once categorized certain tribes as criminals under [the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871](#), which was repealed after independence and led to their denotification.
- **The Government Order:**
  - On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Madhya Pradesh, issued an order for:
    - Extensive search and surveillance of [nomadic tribes](#), including the [Pardhi community](#), a **Scheduled Tribe** in Madhya Pradesh.
    - Targeted search operations in the forest circles of Narmadapuram, Seoni, Chhindwara, Betul, Bhopal, Jabalpur, and Balaghat.
    - Use of dog squads to conduct searches at the homes of nomadic tribes.
    - Mandatory documentation of the denotified tribes' presence at the nearest police station.
    - Surveillance of tribal traders selling household plastic items, bedsheets, herbs, and plants in tiger corridors.
- **Colonial Mindset and Legal Violations:**
  - It was pointed out that **the Forest Department is stereotyping nomadic tribes as habitual criminals**, which contradicts multiple Supreme Court judgments.
  - Experts argue that the order violates rights under [the Forest Rights Act, 2006](#), which ensures:
    - Right to reside and cultivate forest land
    - Access to forest produce
    - Community tenure rights over habitats
    - Seasonal resource access for nomadic and pastoralist communities
    - Protection Under SC/ST Act & Potential Legal Repercussions
    - Tribal rights also receive protection under [the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes \(Prevention of Atrocities\) Act, 1989](#).

## Pardhi Tribe

- It is found mostly in **Maharashtra and parts of Madhya Pradesh**.
- The word Pardhi is derived from the **Marathi word 'Paradh'** meaning hunting and the **Sanskrit word 'papardhi'** meaning the game to be hunted.
- They speak **mixed dialects of Rajasthani and Gujarati**, mainly **Wagdi and Pardhi**

**languages.**

- These languages are grouped in the **Bhil languages** of the **western Indo-Aryan language group**.

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