



drishti

Meghalayan Minor Tribes Exclusion

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Recently, the Government of Meghalaya has decided to exclude '**unrepresented tribes**' from the provisions of the **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution.

- The five minor tribes namely, **Bodo-Kachari, Hajong, Koch, Mann, and Rabha** are clubbed together as '**unrepresented tribes**' for nomination in Meghalaya's autonomous tribal councils.

These minor tribes are **indigenous to Meghalaya** and have been living in the state much before its creation in 1972.

- These tribal councils are in the names of **Garo, Jaintia, and Khasi** district councils, that form the State's three major autonomous councils (predominantly the **matrilineal communities**).
- On September 26, 2019, a sub-committee constituted by the State government had decided to recommend to the **Standing Committee of Parliament** for the removal of the word 'unrepresented tribes' from the Sixth Schedule.

This move has excluded 5 minor tribes in the State.

- The Sixth Schedule makes special provisions for the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes and the tribal areas residing in the parts or the whole of the four northeastern states namely, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura.

The proposed amendment will deprive some of these Scheduled Tribes of their **constitutional rights to be represented** in the autonomous district councils as of now, it will not be possible for them to get elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

Hajong Tribe

- The Hajong are tribal people native to the Indian subcontinent mostly in the northeast **Indian states and Bangladesh**. The majority of them are settled in India.
- Hajongs are predominantly the **rice farmers** and perform **endogamy**.
- The Hajongs are **Hindus** and observe Hindu rites and customs.

Rabha Tribe

- They are indigenous Mongoloid community of Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, and the Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal.
- The language/dialect spoken by the **Rabha** people is mostly Rabha as well as Assamese.
- In Meghalaya, Rabhas are mostly found in Garo Hills districts.

Koch Tribe

- They are a Tibeto-Burman ethnolinguistic group of Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and Bangladesh.
- Their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group.
- According to the census of 1881, Koch belong to a group of Bodo-Kachari people.

Bodo-Kachari

- It is a generic term applied to a number of ethnic groups that are predominantly living in the Northeast Indian state of Assam.
- They generally speak Assamese and other Tibeto-Burman languages and have a shared ancestry.

Source: TH