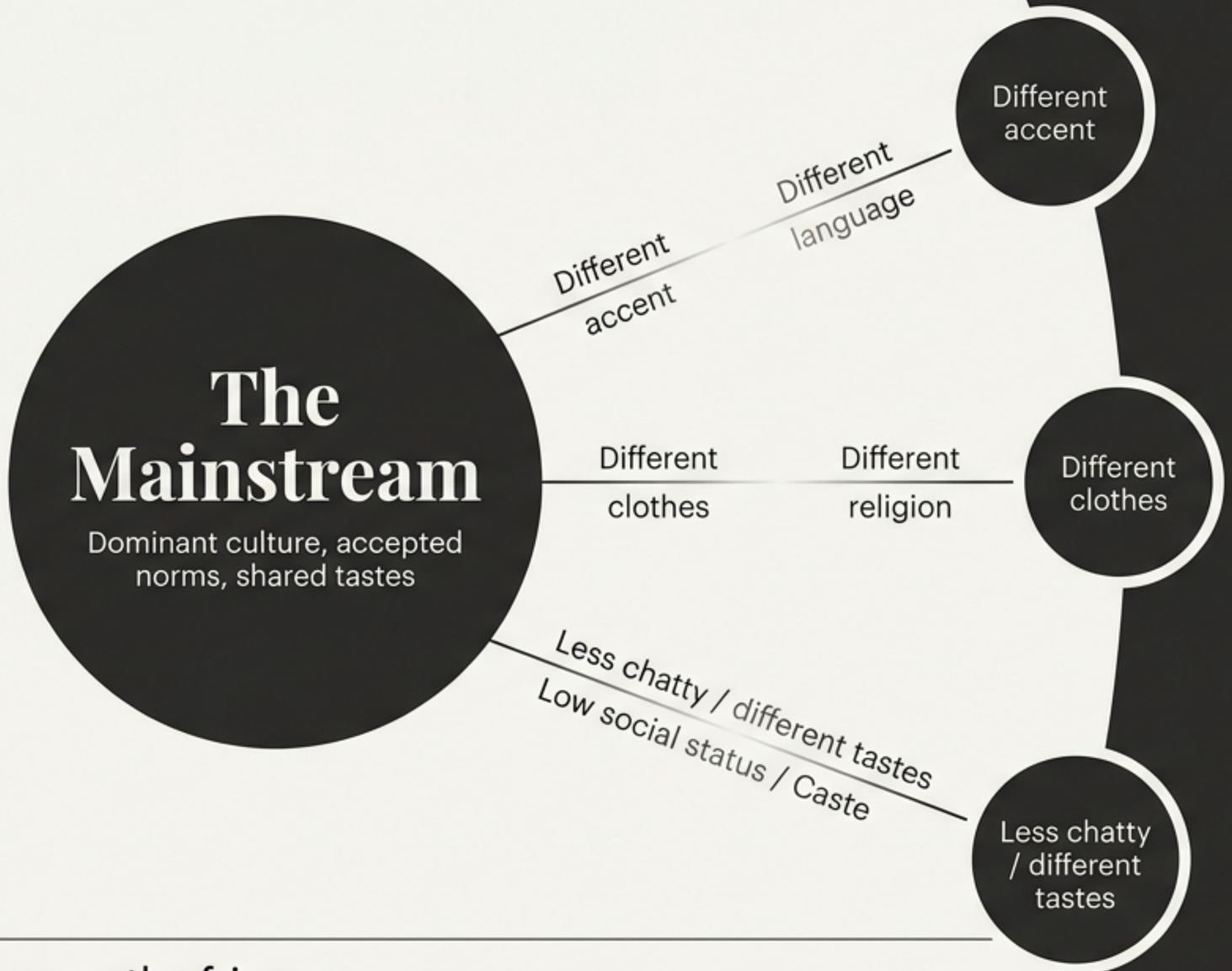
The Center and the Margins

Understanding how economic, social, and cultural forces push communities to the edges of society.



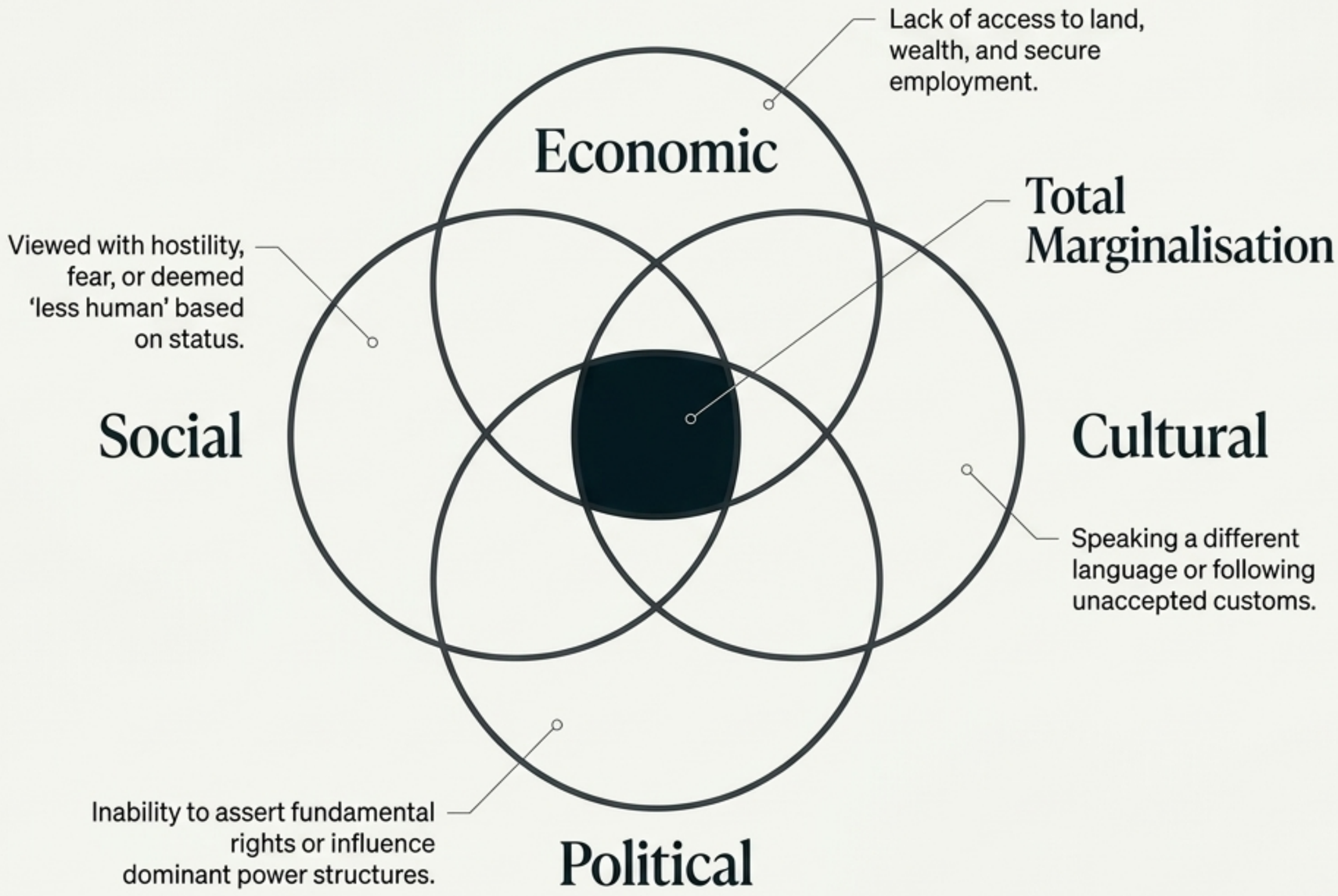


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To be marginalised is to be forced to occupy the fringes.
It starts with a sense of difference and ends in powerlessness.

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Marginalisation is seldom experienced in one sphere. These factors work together to create a cycle of disadvantage.

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Mainstream Stereotype



- Showcased merely through colorful costumes and dances.

- Wrongly labeled as ‘exotic, primitive, and backward.’

- Unfairly blamed for their own lack of advancement or resistance to change.



Historical Reality

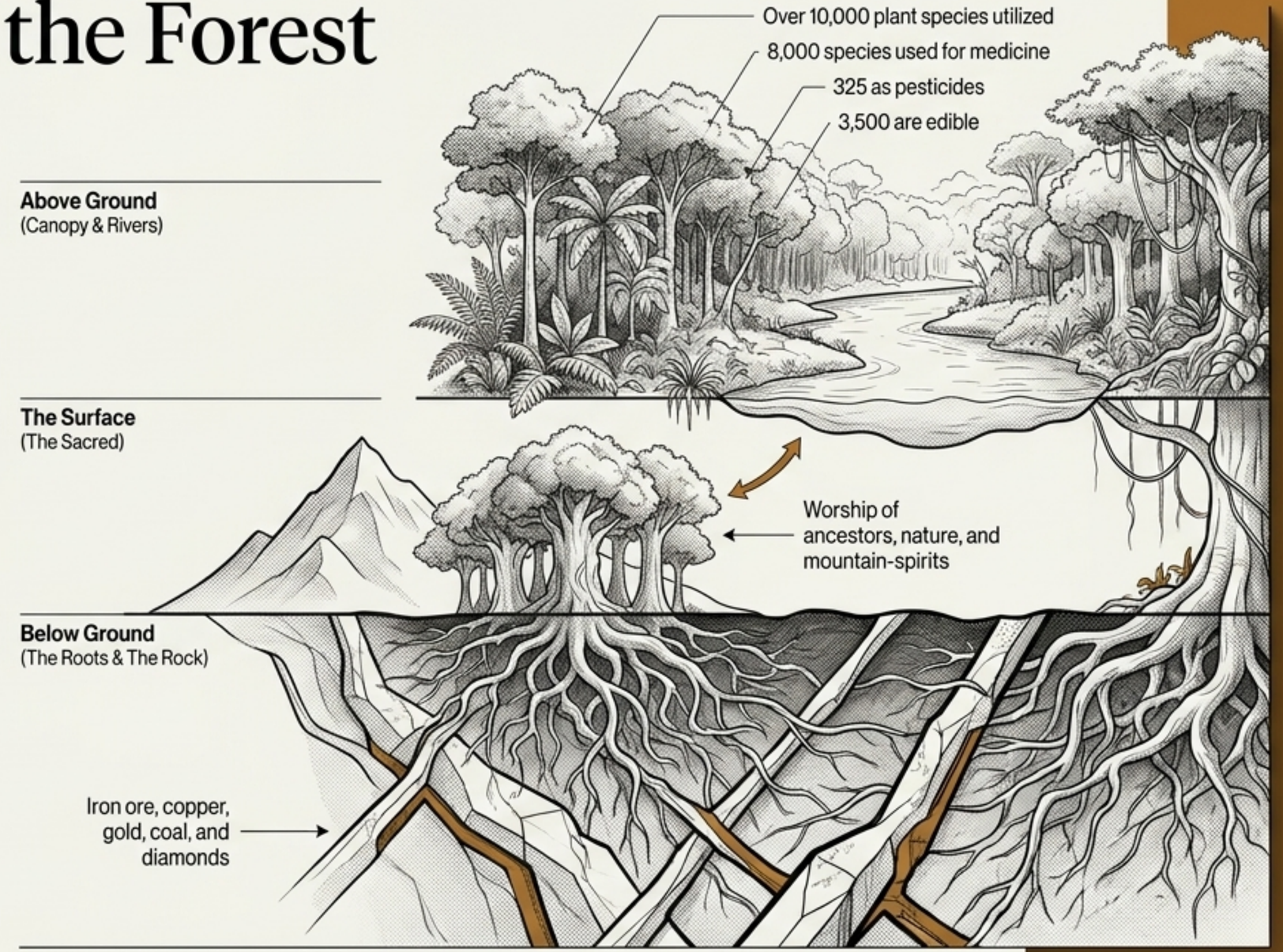
- **The Original Inhabitants:** 8% of India’s population (over 500 different groups).

- **Egalitarian Societies:** Distinctly non-hierarchical, radically different from communities organized around caste or ruled by kings.

- **Linguistic Roots:** Possess their own ancient languages (like Santhali) that deeply influenced mainstream Indian languages.

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The Roots of the Forest



Forests were historically crucial to the development of all empires.

Today, India's most important mining and industrial centers (Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Bokaro) sit directly on top of traditional Adivasi lands.

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Dadu’s Story: The Pipeline of Displacement



Forest Autonomy

Sustainable living. Deep respect for land, forest, and river.



Corporate Mining & State Policy

“Companywallahs” arrive seeking iron ore. Backed by authorities, forests are cleared by contractors.



Forced Eviction

Coercion, forged thumbprints, beatings, and court battles without legal representation. Lands abandoned.



Urban Poverty

Migration to cities for seasonal work. Loss of traditional livelihood. Cramped into rented rooms, cut off from education and language (Santhali).

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79%

The percentage of persons displaced by mining projects in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Jharkhand who are tribals.

1,09,652 sq km

The area covered by 54 national parks and 372 wildlife sanctuaries—traditional Adivasi lands where they are now evicted or termed ‘encroachers’.

The Cycle of Deprivation

Losing land means losing traditions, customs, and survival systems. Currently, 45% of tribal groups in rural areas and 35% in urban areas live below the poverty line, leading to severe malnourishment and low literacy.

“They took our farming land... the cremation ground, temple, well and pond. How will we survive?” – Gobindha Maran, displaced in Orissa.

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Beyond Numbers

The term ‘minority’ encompasses issues of power, access to resources, and cultural dimensions.

Constitutional Safeguards

The Indian Constitution provides safeguards to religious and linguistic minorities to protect India’s cultural diversity and promote equality.



Why are safeguards necessary? Because the culture of the majority heavily influences how society and government express themselves. Without protection, smaller communities face the risk of cultural domination, discrimination, and insecurity regarding their assets and well-being.

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The Sachar Committee Data

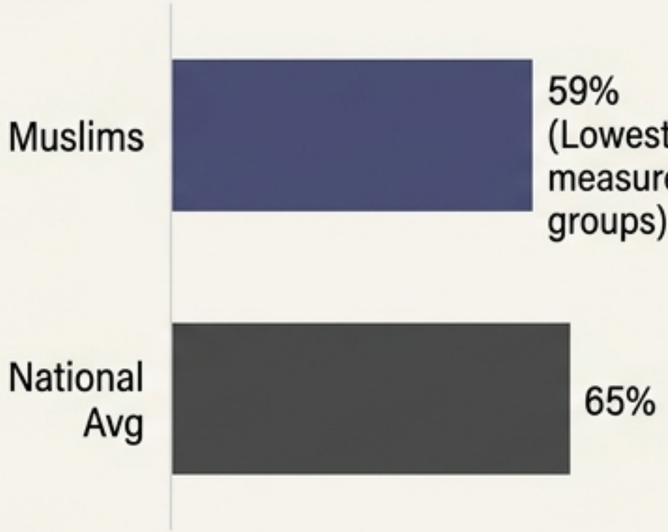
Basic Amenities

63.6% of Muslims live in Kutcha houses (vs 55.2% Hindus)

Only **30%** have access to electricity (vs 43.2% Hindus)

Only **19.4%** have access to piped water (vs 25.3% Hindus)

Education & Literacy



Context: 25% of Muslim children (6-14) have never enrolled or dropped out. (**Debunking the myth:** Only 4% attend Madarsas, 66% attend government schools).

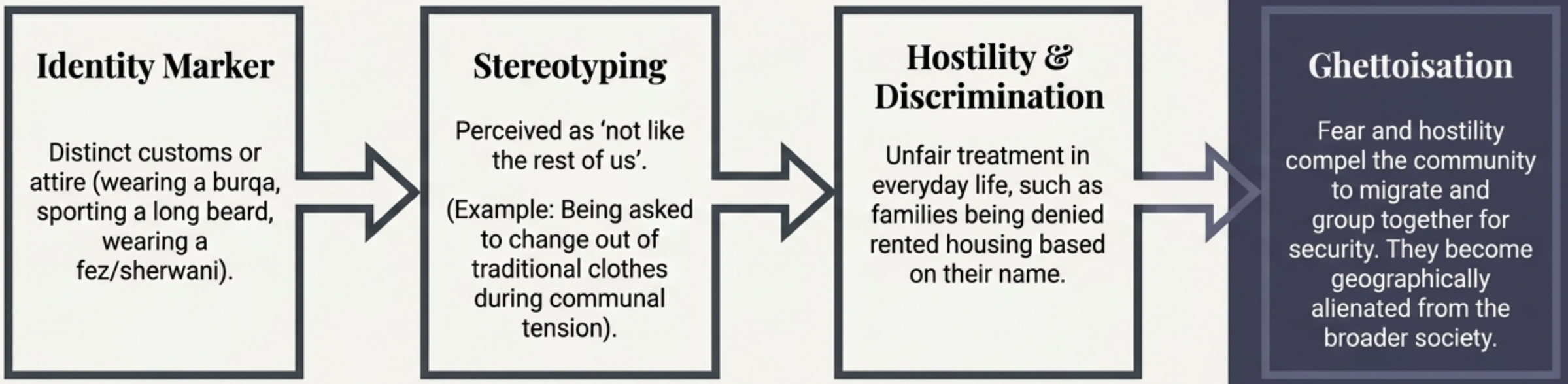
Public Employment



Despite being 13.5% of the population, Muslims make up only:

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The Pipeline of Prejudice



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Paths to the Margins

	Adivasis	Muslims
Catalyst for Exclusion	Resource extraction and state/corporate land acquisition.	Social prejudice and historical socio-economic neglect.
Nature of Displacement	Physical and Geographic (Driven from ancestral forests to urban margins).	Institutional and Spatial (Ghettoisation within cities, denial of housing/jobs).
Prevailing Stereotypes	Viewed as ‘exotic, primitive, or backward.’	Viewed as ‘distinct, un-Indian, or a cause for fear.’

The causes differ entirely, but the resulting powerlessness is identical.

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Economic Disadvantage

Lack of wealth, land, and secure employment.



Destruction in one sphere naturally impacts the other. Economic and social marginalisation are permanently interlinked.

Social Low Status

Stereotyping, discrimination, and hostility from the mainstream.

Lack of Access

Inability to access basic amenities, healthcare, and quality education.

Vulnerability & Powerlessness

Unable to assert fundamental rights or fight legal battles.

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Reclaiming the Center



- No one is marginalized all the time in exactly the same way. Every marginalized community has a long history of struggle, resistance, and resilience.

- They seek to maintain their cultural distinctiveness while demanding equal access to rights, development, and opportunities.

- The Constitution provides the framework for equality, but it requires all citizens to recognize prejudice, break the cycle, and protect the diversity that makes India unique.

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