



SMILE Scheme

For Prelims: SMILE Scheme, Central Sector Schemes, National Institute of Social Defence, National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation

For Mains: SMILE Scheme for beggars and its significance in enhancing their livelihood, Decriminalization of begging, status of beggars in India.

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated a scheme **SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise**.

- It includes a sub-scheme - '**Central Sector Scheme**' for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.
- Currently, a pilot project of it is ongoing in 7 cities namely Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Indore, Lucknow, Nagpur and Patna.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - It is a new Scheme after the **merger of existing Schemes for Beggars and Transgenders**.
 - Scheme provides for the **use of the existing shelter homes** available with the State/UT Governments and Urban local bodies for rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of Begging.
 - In case of non-availability of existing shelter homes, **new dedicated shelter homes** are to be set up by the implementing agencies.
- **Focus:**
 - The focus of the scheme is extensively on **rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counseling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages** and so on.
 - It is estimated that an approximate **60,000 poorest persons would be benefited** under this scheme for leading a life of dignity.
- **Implementation:**
 - It will be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.
- **Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Beggars:**
 - It will be a **comprehensive scheme for persons engaged in the act of begging**.
 - The scheme has been implemented **in the selected cities on pilot basis having large concentrations** of the Beggar community.
 - During the year 2019-20, this Ministry had released an amount of Rs. **1 Crore to National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)** and Rs. 70 Lakh to **National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** for skill development programmes for beggars.

▪ **Status of Beggars In India:**

- According to the **Census 2011**, the **total number of beggars in India is 4,13,670** (including 2,21,673 males and 1,91,997 females) and the number has increased from the last census.
- **West Bengal tops the chart followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** at number two and three respectively. Lakshadweep merely has two vagrants according to the 2011 census.
- Among the union territories, **New Delhi had the largest number of beggars 2,187** followed by 121 in Chandigarh.
- Among the northeastern states, **Asam topped the chart** with 22,116 beggars, while Mizoram ranked low with 53 beggars.
- Recently, the **Supreme Court** has agreed to examine a plea for **decriminalising begging** which has been made an offense in various states under Prevention of Begging Act.

National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation

- It is a **Government of India Undertaking** under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It was incorporated **under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956** on 13th January 1992 as a Company not for profit.
- Its objective is **to promote economic and developmental activities** for the benefit of Backward Classes and to assist the poorer section of these classes in skill development and self-employment ventures.

National Institute of Social Defence

- The NISD is an **Autonomous Body** and is registered under **Societies Act XXI of 1860** with the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT), Delhi.
- It is a **central advisory body** for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It is the **nodal training and research institute** in the field of social defence.
- The institute currently **focuses on human resource development** in the areas of drug abuse prevention, welfare of senior citizens, beggary prevention, transgender and other social defence issues.
- The **mandate of the institute is to provide inputs for the social defence programmes** of the Government of India through training, research & documentation.

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