



Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs

For Prelims: De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes, Related commissions and committees, Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC), Schemes for DNT

For Mains: Issues Related to SCs & STs, Government Policies & Interventions, State of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes in India

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has said that only 402 online applications are received to avail benefits under SEED (Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes).

- More than 10 crore Indians from 1,400 communities belong to these groups, as per the latest estimates available with the government.

What is SEED?

▪ About:

- The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified/Nomadic/SemiNomadic (SEED) communities was launched in February 2022 by **the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.
- It aims to **provide free competitive exam coaching to these** students, to provide health insurance to families, to uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives, and to provide financial assistance for housing.

▪ Components:

- Free coaching to students from these communities for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc.
- **Health Insurance** through [PMJAY](#) of National Health Authority.
- Livelihoods to support income generation
- Housing (through PMAY/IAY).

▪ Features:

- It ensures expenditure of **Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years** beginning 2021-22.
- The [DWBDNCs \(Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities\)](#) has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme.
- An online portal has been developed by the department which will ensure seamless registration and will also act as a repository of the data on these communities.

Who are De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes?

- These are communities that are the **most vulnerable and deprived**.
- DNTs are communities that were **'notified' as being 'born criminals'** during the British regime under a series of laws starting with **the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871**.

- These Acts were repealed by the Independent Indian Government in 1952, and these communities were "**De-Notified**".
- A few of these communities which were listed as de-notified were also nomadic.
 - **Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities** are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time.
- Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes never had access to private land or home ownership.
- While most DNTs are spread across the **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories**, some DNTs are not covered in any of the SC, ST or OBC categories.
- Many commissions and committees constituted since Independence have referred to the problems of these communities.
 - These include the Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee, 1947 constituted in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh),
 - **Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee in 1949** (it was based on the report of this committee the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed),
 - **Kaka Kalelkar Commission** (also called first OBC Commission) constituted in 1953.
 - The B P Mandal Commission constituted in 1980 also made some recommendations on the issue.
 - The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), 2002 held that DNTs have been wrongly stigmatised as crime prone and subjected to high handed treatment as well as exploitation by the representatives of law and order and general society.
 - The NCRWC was established under the chairmanship of Justice M N Venkatachaliah.
- It has been **estimated that South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population.**
 - In India, roughly 10% of the population is Denotified and Nomadic.
 - While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities.

What are the Developmental Efforts Regarding DNT?

- **Background:**
 - A **National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT)** was constituted in 2006 by the then government.
 - It was headed **by Balkrishna Sidram Renke** and submitted its report in 2008.
 - The commission held that "It is an irony that these tribes somehow escaped the attention of our Constitution makers.
 - They are deprived of Constitutional support unlike Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes".
 - The Renke commission estimated their population at around 10.74 crores based on **Census 2001**.
 - **Idate Commission:**
 - The National Commission was constituted in 2015 under the chairmanship of **Shri Bhiku Ramji Idate**.
 - This commission was tasked **to identify and properly list** DNT communities in different states, to evaluate the progress of development of these communities in the states.
 - Based on the recommendation of this commission, the Government of India set **up the Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs & NTs (DWBDNCs) in 2019**.
- **Schemes for DNT:**
 - **Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs:**
 - This Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched w.e.f. 2014-15 for the welfare of those DNT students who are not covered under SC, ST or OBC.
 - **Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:**
 - This Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched w.e.f. 2014-15 is implemented through State Governments/ UT Administrations/ Central Universities.
 - From the year 2017-18, the scheme "Assistance to Voluntary Organization working for the Welfare of OBCs " has been extended for DNT.

[Source: TH](#)

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