



## Challenges and Developments Related with Denotified Tribes

**For Prelims:** [Idate Commission report](#), Nomadic, Semi Nomadic, and De-Notified Tribes (NTs, SNTs, and DNTs) in India, [National Commission for Schedule Tribes](#), Kanjar, Nat, Pardhi, and Sapera, Sixth Schedule.

**For Mains:** Issues related to Denotified Tribes (DNTs), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs), Challenges and Measures.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

The **Denotified Tribes (DNTs), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs)** in India face numerous challenges, including **denial of caste certificates** in most states.

- Despite the Indian Government launching the [Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs scheme \(SEED\)](#) for their upliftment, various other issues have led to growing discontent among these communities.

### What are the Major Challenges faced by DNTs, NTs, and SNTs?

- **Historical Injustice:** These tribes were labeled **criminal tribes** under the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** during British rule, stigmatizing them for generations.
  - Despite being denotified in 1952, the stigma persists, impacting their social and economic inclusion.
  - Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes **never had access to private land or home ownership**.
- **Unclassified Communities:** The **Idate Commission (2017)** identified a total of **1,526 DNT, NT and SNT** communities.
  - Out of these 1,526 identified communities, **269 communities** are still **unclassified** under the categories of **either SC, ST or OBC**.
  - Similarly, many individuals from these communities are unable to obtain **caste certificates in 29 states**, limiting their access to welfare schemes.
  - **Several estimates** suggest a significant population of **over 25 crore** individuals, yet many lack basic identity recognition.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Recommendations of the Idate Commission, including a **permanent commission and caste-census inclusion**, remain unaddressed.
  - The [SEED scheme](#) has seen limited success due to delays and lack of outreach. Overlapping benefits with SC/ST/OBC schemes lead to difficulties in beneficiary identification.
- **Lack of Representation:** Leadership positions remain scarce for DNT communities, with no **full-time chairperson** in the Union government's [Development and Welfare Board for](#)

## Idate Commission, 2014

- **About:** It was established in 2014 under the leadership of **Bhiku Ramji Idate**, to compile a statewide catalogue of Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs).
- **Mandate:** It was mandated to recognize those excluded from [Scheduled Castes \(SC\)](#), [Scheduled Tribes \(ST\)](#) and [Other Backward Classes \(OBC\)](#) categories and recommend welfare measures for their well-being.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Create a **permanent commission** with legal standing for the DNTs, SNTs, and NTs.
  - Assign individuals not identified in the SCs/STs/OBCs list to the OBC category.
  - Enhance legal and constitutional safeguards by incorporating a **third schedule into the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** to prevent atrocities and restore the feeling of security amongst the members of the community.
  - Form a **distinct department to address the welfare** of these communities in states with significant populations.
  - Undertake a thorough **survey of DNT families** to determine their estimated numbers and distribution.

**Note:** Instead of establishing a **permanent commission** for De-notified Tribes (DNTs), the government set up the **DWBDNC under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, citing that a permanent commission would conflict with the existing **National Commissions for SCs, STs, and OBCs**.

## Who are DNTs, NTs, and SNTs?

- **About:** The term **De-notified Tribes** refers to communities that were once classified under the **Criminal Tribes Acts, 1871** which were implemented by the British Government.
  - The Acts were abolished by the **Government of India in 1952**, leading to the **De-Notification** of these communities.
  - 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.
  - While most DNTs are spread across the [SC](#), [ST](#) and [OBC](#) categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of the SC, ST or OBC categories.
- **Distribution:** DNTs encompass a wide range of communities, each with unique cultural practices, languages, and socio-economic conditions. Communities include the **Kanjar, Nat, Pardhi, and Sapera**.
  - South Asia is estimated to have the largest nomadic population in the world. In India, approximately **10% of the population** comprises NTs, SNTs, and DNTs.
  - While there are around 150 De-notified Tribes, the Nomadic Tribes population includes about 500 distinct communities.
- **Major Committees/Commissions for DNTs, NTs, and SNTs Communities:**
  - **The Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee, 1947** constituted in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh).
  - **Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee, 1949**.
    - Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 was repealed based on the recommendation of this committee.
  - [Kaka Kalelkar Commission](#) (also called **first OBC Commission**), **1953**.
  - [B P Mandal Commission](#), **1980**.
    - The commission also made some recommendations related to the issue of NTs, SNTs, and DNTs Communities.
  - 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.

- **Renke Commission (2005)**: The commission had estimated their population to be around **10 to 12 crores** at the time.

## What is SEED?

- **About:** The **Scheme for Economic Empowerment Denotified, Nomadic, Semi Nomadic** communities was launched in **February 2022** by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- **Aim and Components:** It aims to **provide free competitive exam coaching to these students for Civil Services**, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, **MBA, etc.**
  - To provide health insurance to families, to uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives, and to provide financial assistance for housing.
    - Health Insurance through **PM Jan Arogya Yojana**.
    - Livelihoods through **National and State Rural Livelihood Missions (NRLM and SRLMs)**.
    - Land and Housing construction of houses through **PM Awas Yojana**.
- **Features:** It ensures expenditure of **Rs.200 crore** to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22.
  - The **DWBDNCs** has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme.

## What are India's Efforts Taken for DNTs, NTs, and SNTs?

- **Dr Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs:** This **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** was launched in **2014-15** for the welfare of those DNT students who are not covered under **SC, ST or OBC**.
  - The scheme of **Pre-matric Scholarships** for DNT students is helpful in spreading education amongst DNT children, especially the girl child.
- **Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:** This **Centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in 2014-15**, is implemented through State Governments/UT Administrations/Central Universities.
  - The goal of the program is to offer hostel accommodations to DNT students who do not fall under the categories of SC, ST, or OBC.

## Way Forward

- **Policy Implementation:** Expedite the classification process for DNT communities within SC/ST/OBC frameworks. Issue caste certificates alongside **regular caste classifications. e.g. SC-DNT, ST-DNT.**
- **Strengthening SEED Scheme:** Improve **outreach through active Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) participation** and awareness drives.
  - Simplify eligibility processes to ensure that all eligible families access education, housing, and livelihood support.
- **Identity and Representation:** Conduct a **caste-based census** to capture the actual population and socio-economic conditions of these communities.
  - Encourage community representation in policy making through reserved leadership roles.
- **Institutional Reforms:** Establish a permanent commission with a clear mandate to oversee DNT welfare. Ensure **district-level complaints committees** to address grievances.

### **DRISHTI Mains Question:**

Critically examine the socio-economic issues faced by the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes communities and suggest policy measures for their upliftment.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. With reference to 'Changpa' community of India, consider the following statements:(2014)**

1. They live mainly in the State of Uttarakhand.
2. They rear the Pashmina goats that yield a fine wool.
3. They are kept in the category of Scheduled Tribes.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

### Mains:

**Q. What are the two major legal initiatives by the State since Independence addressing discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (STs). (2017)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/challenges-and-developments-related-with-denotified-tribes>

