



## 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)**

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