

## 4. Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)

**Prelims Syllabus:** Governance

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-II Governance, Transparency & Accountability, Citizens Charters, Government Scheme/Policies

### Why in News?

- The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi Nomadic Communities (SEED).

### Who are the DNTs?

- The term 'De-notified Tribes' stands for all those communities which were once notified under the Criminal Tribes Acts, enforced by the British Raj between 1871 and 1947.
- These Acts were repealed after Independence in 1952, and these communities were "De-Notified".
- The DNTs (of whom most are the medieval period Banjaras) are the most neglected, marginalized, and economically and socially deprived communities.
- Most of them have been living a life of destitution for generations and still continue to do so with an uncertain and gloomy future.

### SEED Scheme:

- Under the scheme, the government seeks to provide free coaching to students for civil Services Examinations, competitive exams for admission to professional courses; health Insurance; livelihood support and housing.
- It has been formulated for families having income from all sources of Rs.2.50 lakh or less per Annum and not availing any such benefits from similar Scheme of Centre Government or the State Government.
- The Scheme will be implemented through a portal, developed by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Post verification, the funds will be transferred directly to the beneficiaries in their account.
- The other implementing agencies are Ministry of Rural Development, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and National Health Authority (NHA).

### Components of the scheme:

- The Scheme will have following four components:

### **Free Coaching:**

- A component of free Coaching for DNT Students has been envisioned for the educational Empowerment of these Communities.
- The objective of this component is to enable them to appear in competitive examinations/ admission to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc for obtaining an appropriate job in Public/Private Sector.
- The selection of the candidates for each course will be based on system generated merit list through the portal.
- Approximately, 6250 students will be provided free coaching under this component in five years. The total funds spend in the five years will be Rs.50 crore.

### **Health Insurance:**

- Members of these communities are likely to have little or no access to medical facilities and other benefits available under the mainstream health policies.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to National Health Authority (NHA) in association with State Health Agencies (SHAs).
- These agencies will provide a health insurance cover of Rs.5 lakhs per family per year for families as per norms of “Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

### **Livelihood Initiatives:**

- The decline of traditional occupations of DNT/NT/SNT communities has exacerbated their Poverty. A focus to support Livelihood Generation for these communities is required.
- The Primary Objective of the scheme is to provide Financial Assistance to National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).
- It would enhance productivity growth in key livelihood sectors for Employment Generation through Investments in Institutional Support, technical assistance.

### **Financial Support for Housing:**

- Considering the shortage of houses for DNTs, it has been proposed to earmark a separate outlay for PMAY to support specific importance in providing houses only for DNTs living in rural areas.
- It is for those who have not taken benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana as SC, ST, OBC and are living below poverty line.
- The admissible support is Rs 1.20 lakhs in plains and 1.30 lakhs in hilly areas (per unit assistance).

### Why need such a Scheme?

- DNTs escaped the attention of our developmental framework and thus are deprived of the support unlike Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Historically, these communities never had access to private land or homeownership.
- These tribes used forests and grazing lands for their livelihood and residential use and had “strong ecological connections.
- Many of them are dependent upon various types of natural resources and carve out intricate ecological niches for their survival.
- The changes in ecology and environment seriously affect their Livelihood Options.

