Tripura’s Darlong Community in ST List

Why in news?

Darlong Community in Tripura was officially included in the list of Scheduled Tribes after the Lok Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

Who are Darlongs?

> *Tripura houses 19 tribal communities including Tripuri, Brus, Jamatia, Noatia, Uchoi, Chakma, Mog, Lushai, Kuki, Munda, Kour, Oram, Santhal, Bhil, Bhutia, Sermai, Garo, Khasi, Lepcha and Halam.*

- Darlong is a tribal community of 11,000 people with a high prevalence of education, cultural activities serving in different high positions in the local administration.
- Darlongs, despite being Scheduled Tribes, were never given ST certificates.
- They were considered a generic tribe under the Kuki community, and were handed their tribal certificates as members of ‘Kuki’ community.
- The identity crisis among them culminated in the demand for a separate statutory identity of their own in 1995.
- A bill to include Darlongs in the list of STs as a sub-tribe of Kuki community was first placed before the Parliament in 2016.

What does the amendment entail?

> *As per Article 342 (1), the President may after consultation with the Governor specify the tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes.*
>
> *As per Article 342 (2), Parliament may by law include in or exclude any tribal community from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1)*

- The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022 seeks to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 for inclusion of certain community in the list of Scheduled Tribes in relation to the State of Tripura.
- The Bill proposes to include Darlong community as a sub-tribe of "Kuki" in the list of Scheduled Tribes.

Why is tribal identity a big issue in Tripura?

> *The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution provides for the administration of tribal areas in*

Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of the tribal population.

- Nearly 30 % of population in Tripura are tribals, who mostly live in areas under jurisdiction of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)
- When the state was merged into the Indian Union, it saw tribals become minority due to arrival of East Pakistani refugees who fled their country.
- There have been rising demands for Tipraland – a proposed separate state for tribals.
- Greater Tipraland – a proposed separate state for Tiprasa or Tripuris (tribal and non tribal) living in the state is also witnessed.

What are the government's major tribal development plans?

- **NCST-** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) was established by inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
- **Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY) -** It aims at creating enabling environment for need based and outcome oriented holistic development of the tribal people.
- **Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana**- It was implemented for integrated development in tribal villages spanning from health, education and drinking water.
- **STC funds**- There have been gradual and a steady increase in Scheduled Tribe component (STC) funds since the last few years.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs had recently introduced a scheme of nearly Rs 7,000 crore to provide broadband and 4G connectivity in tribal hamlets under the STC funds.
- **Scholarships**- Under thescholarship schemes, around 30 lakh ST students are being covered for financial assistance through DBT mode
- **Eklavya Model Schools**-It was set up to impart quality education to ST children in remote areas in order to enable them to avail of opportunities in high and professional educational courses and get employment in various sectors.
- **Livelihood oppurtunities**- Several schemes have been introduced to support marketing and development of activities for livelihood such as
    - Institutional Support For Development And Marketing Of Tribal Products/Produce
    - Marketing Of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Through Minimum Support Price (MSP)
    - The Van Dhan Scheme

References

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