

UPSC Civil Services Examination

Political Science & International Relations

Topic: - NCST- National Commission for Scheduled Tribes - Indian Polity Notes

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

The Constitution of India does not give any definition for Scheduled Tribes. According to *Article 366(25)* of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes are those communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. Also, *Article 342* of the Constitution says that: The Scheduled Tribes are the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within these tribes and tribal communities which have been declared as such by the President through a public notification.

Scheduled Tribes in India

According to the 2011 Census, the Scheduled Tribes account for 104 million representing 8.6% of the country's population. These Scheduled Tribes are spread throughout the country largely in forest and hilly regions.

- The essential characteristics of these communities are:-
 - Primitive Traits
 - Geographical isolation
 - Distinct culture
 - Shy of contact with community at large
 - Economically backwards
- As in the case of the SCs, the Plan objective of empowering the tribals is being achieved through a three-pronged strategy of **social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice**.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is a constitutional body that was established by the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.

- Earlier, there was only one commission, which was for both the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. In 2004, after the 89th Constitutional Amendment Act, the NCST was established by bifurcating the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into the NCST and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.
- This amendment replaced the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with two distinct commissions which are:
 - National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)
 - National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

Composition of NCST

The NCST consists of one chairperson, one vice chairperson and three full-time members. Out of the three members, there should compulsorily be one lady member. All the members of the Commission has a tenure of 3 years.

Functions of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- NCST investigates and monitors all matters related to safeguarding the provisions for Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution and evaluating the working of those safeguards.
- NCST will inquire into specific complaints concerned with the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the STs.
- The commission participates and advises on the planning process for the socio-economic development of the STs and also evaluates the progress of the various developmental activities.
- The President will be presented with an annual report of the working of those safeguards. Apart from annual reports, other reports also will be submitted to the President as and when necessary.
- The Commission will also give reports on what measures are to be taken by both the central and various state governments for an effective execution of the measures and safeguards for the protection, development and welfare of the STs.
- Other functions of NCST are related to welfare, protection, development & advancement of the STs.

UPSC Questions related to Scheduled Tribes and NCST

Who is the present chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes?

- Urmila Singh was appointed as the Chairperson during the second commission of 2007. The third Commission was constituted in 2010 with Rameshwar Oraon as the Chairperson.

- At the age of 71, Nand Kumar Sai, became the successor of Rameshwar after his tenure ended in 2016. Nand Kumar Sai is a senior tribal leader and an ex-parliamentarian from Chhattisgarh.

Who appoints SC & ST Commission?

- The President of India appoints them.

