

The Effectiveness of Skill Development Programs for DNT Youth in Madhya Pradesh

Prof. (Dr.) Kirti Diddi¹, Dr. Sushil Kumar²

Principal, Nirmala College Ujjain (M.P.)

Ph.D., Assistant Professor (Political Science), Nirmala College, Ujjain (M.P.)

Abstract-De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNT) youth in Madhya Pradesh face an uphill battle in accessing education and securing stable livelihoods. Skill development programs are often seen as a path to empowerment, but do they truly deliver for this marginalized community? This study delves into the effectiveness of skill development programs for DNT youth, considering their unique context and needs. Using a mixed-methods approach, it combines quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews with DNT youth, trainers, and stakeholders. Analysis reveals a strong desire for skills training among DNT youth, but barriers like limited awareness, accessibility, and culturally insensitive program design hinder their participation. Traditional livelihoods offer few opportunities, driving youth towards market-aligned skills in sectors like construction, hospitality, and IT. While programs improve employability, income generation, and confidence, systemic challenges like social stigma and lack of social capital remain. The key to sustainable impact lies in culturally sensitive training, integrating traditional knowledge, and providing robust job placement and financial support. This research confirms the promise of skill development for DNT youth empowerment in Madhya Pradesh but emphasizes the need for a tailored and holistic approach. Recommendations include focusing on market-relevant skills, culturally sensitive methods, and strong linkages to employment and financial support. Additionally, addressing systemic issues like social stigma and promoting community participation are crucial for lasting empowerment.

Keywords: *Youth, DNT, Nomadic, Skill Development and Empowerment*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problem:

British-era labeling as "criminal tribes" cast a long shadow on De-Notified Tribes (DNTs) even after its repeal in 1952. Though nomadic life was deemed criminal, it was their livelihood and cultural practice.

The subsequent "Habitual Offender's Act" perpetuated stigma. Today, despite decades of independence, DNTs remain marginalized and neglected. Their unique needs, like access to land and education, demand urgent attention to break this cycle of historical prejudice and empower these communities.

1.2 Who are De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNT)?

DNTs are a diverse group of communities in India facing unique challenges due to their history and lifestyle. They can be broadly categorized into:

De-notified Tribes (DNTs): These communities were labelled as "Criminal Tribes" during British rule, a discriminatory practice abolished in 1952. Despite this, they continue to face social stigma and marginalization.

Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes: These communities traditionally move from place to place rather than settling in one location. They often face challenges accessing necessities like land and housing.

1.3 Historical Context and Challenges:

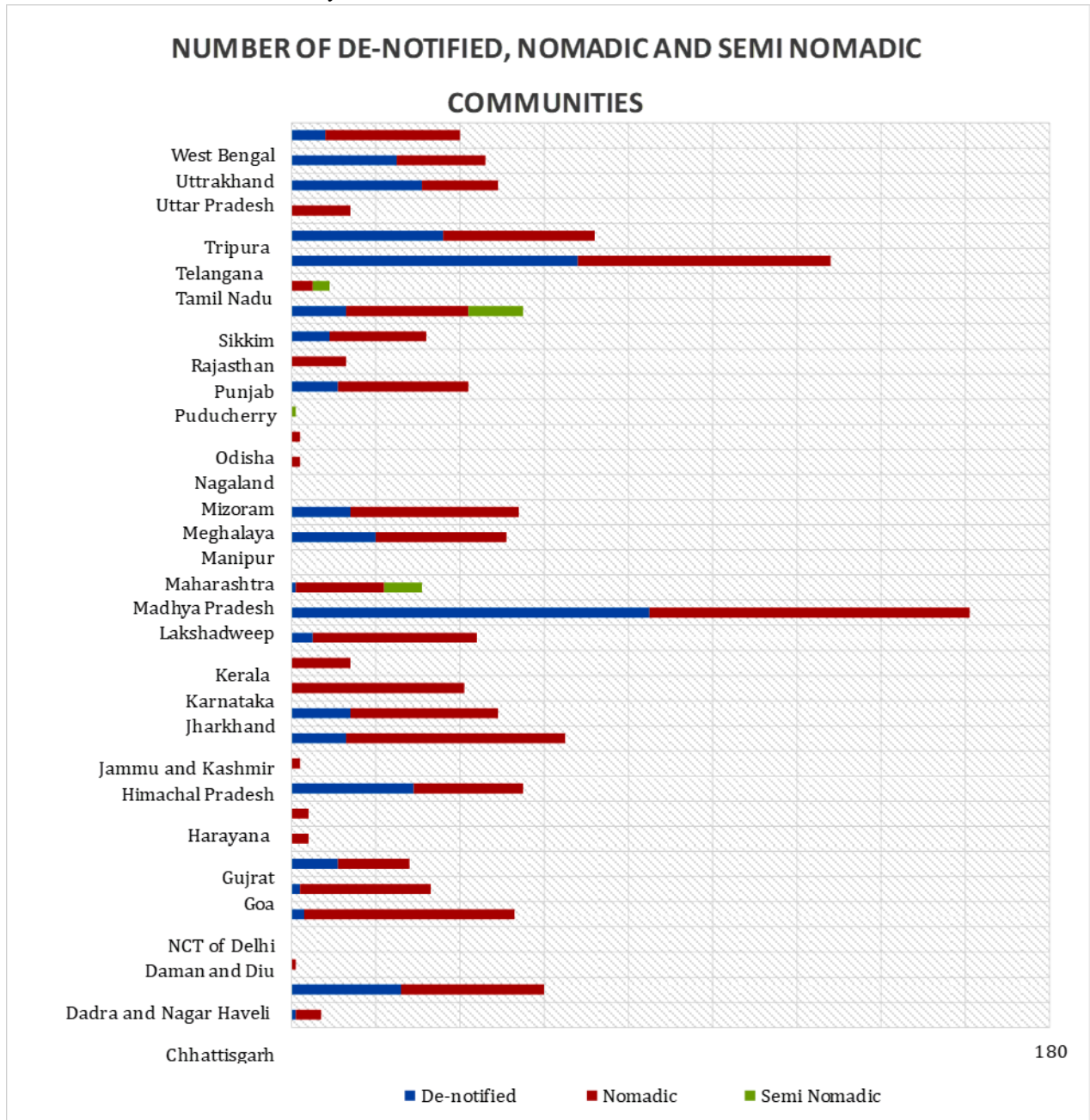
Historically, DNTs lacked access to land ownership and faced discrimination, impacting their socio-economic development. While some DNTs belong to designated categories like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), or Other Backward Classes (OBC), others remain outside these classifications, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

1.4 Population and Demographics:

South Asia, including India, is home to the world's largest nomadic population, with 10% of India comprising De-Notified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs). In Madhya Pradesh, where these communities make up 7-8% of the population (roughly 5-6 million), fears of losing citizenship under the National Population

Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizenship (NRC) loom large. The 2020 NPR update, seen as a precursor to the NRC, has caused anxiety among DNTs who lack formal documentation. Their nomadic lifestyle and historical marginalization make gathering required documents particularly challenging. Compounding the problem, despite existing since 2012, the dedicated department for DNT welfare lacks official population data. Estimates range from 5 to 6 million, highlighting the lack of clarity about their numbers and needs. This uncertainty fuels fears within

the community, with both ruling and opposition parties estimating their population around 8% of the state's total, translating to nearly 6 million individuals. Madhya Pradesh has 51 castes of denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes, according to the *Vimukt Ghummakkar Evam Ardhgummakkar Janjati Kalyan Vibhag*, which was separated from the Tribal Department in 2012. Even after seven years of its separation, the department has no official data about the total population of these communities.



A National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was constituted by the Government of India in February 2014, inter-alia, to prepare a state-wise list of castes belonging to De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes. NCDNT submitted its report on 08.01.2018. As per the report, a total of 1262 communities have been identified as De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic communities across the country, details of which may be seen above. The data belongs to the report of the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes submitted in December 2017. There is a total of 425 Denotified Tribes, 810 Nomadic Tribes, and 27 Semi Nomadic Tribes in India.

1.5 A Long Road to Empowerment: Historical Efforts De-notified Tribes (DNTs) in India have faced centuries of marginalization and discrimination. Numerous committees have been established throughout history to address their plight and advocate for their empowerment. Here's a glimpse into this ongoing quest:

1.5.1 Early Interventions:

- i. Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee (1947): Formed in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), it recommended settling DNTs and providing welfare measures for rehabilitation.
- ii. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee (1949): Led to the repeal of the draconian "Criminal Tribes Act" in 1952, but systemic issues persisted.

1.5.2 Post-Independence Efforts:

- i. Kaka Kalelkar Commission (1953): Also known as the first OBC Commission, it highlighted the need for comprehensive social and economic development for DNTs.
- ii. B P Mandal Commission (1980): Provided recommendations, but DNTs weren't explicitly included in its mandate.
- iii. National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC, 2002): Recognized the continued stigma and exploitation faced by DNTs and called for their inclusion in affirmative action programs.

1.5.3 Recent Developments:

- i. Formation of Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNCs) in 2019: Aims to

formulate and implement welfare and development programs for these communities.

- ii. Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) launched in 2022: Provides financial assistance for income generation activities.

Despite these efforts, DNTs still face significant challenges in accessing education, employment, and necessities. Lack of proper identification, inadequate data, and social stigma continue to hinder their progress. Effective implementation of existing schemes, addressing data gaps, and fostering community participation are crucial steps towards achieving true empowerment for DNTs. Collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and community leaders is essential to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

1.6 Objectives:

This paper explores the following objectives of the effectiveness of skill development programs in empowering De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribe (DNT) youth in Madhya Pradesh.

1. Evaluate Program Impact: Assess the extent to which these programs contribute to empowering DNT youth by improving their employability, income generation, and overall well-being.
2. Identify Barriers and Enablers: Uncover the factors hindering DNT youth participation in these programs, alongside aspects that facilitate their engagement.
3. Tailoring for Success: Develop recommendations for optimizing skill development programs based on insights into their effectiveness and the distinct needs of DNT youth.

1.7 Methodology:

While primarily relying on secondary data for analysis, the research leverages a qualitative approach. Reports, government documents, and evaluations on skill development programs and DNT communities in Madhya Pradesh. Critical review and thematic analysis of secondary data to extract key findings and contextualize them within the broader societal context. Gain valuable insights into program effectiveness, challenges faced by DNT youth, and opportunities for improvement.

2. ROLE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Skill development programs emerge as a potential path toward empowerment, offering these communities a chance to break free from the cycle of marginalization. Historically, traditional livelihoods like agriculture and animal husbandry provided sustenance for DNTs, but limited land ownership and changing economic landscapes threaten their viability. Skill development programs, by equipping individuals with market-relevant skills in sectors like construction, hospitality, and IT, can open doors to new employment avenues and improve earning potential. Beyond economic benefits, skill development fosters a sense of agency and self-confidence within DNT communities. Learning new skills empowers individuals to negotiate better wages, navigate formal employment structures, and challenge societal biases. Additionally, these programs can act as bridges to further education and training, creating a pathway for upward mobility.

However, for skill development programs to truly empower DNTs, several challenges need to be addressed. Cultural sensitivities are crucial, ensuring programs respect and integrate traditional knowledge systems. Accessibility is another key aspect, with programs reaching remote locations and catering to diverse needs. Finally, robust job placement support and financial assistance are essential to bridge the gap between skill acquisition and sustainable employment. The four components of the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs are;

2.1. Educational Empowerment:

Recognizing the importance of education for long-term progress, SEED offers free coaching for DNT students preparing for competitive exams and professional courses. This initiative aims to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for success in fields like medicine, engineering, and business administration, ultimately leading to better employment opportunities. Around 6250 students are expected to benefit from this component, with a total investment of Rs. 50 crores over five years.

2.2. Health Insurance:

Addressing the critical need for healthcare access, SEED collaborates with the National Health Authority (NHA) and State Health Agencies (SHAs) to provide financial assistance. This will enable DNT

communities to benefit from essential medical services and insurance coverage, promoting better health outcomes and financial security.

2.3. Entrepreneurship Development:

The scheme recognizes the entrepreneurial spirit within DNT communities and provides them with crucial support. This includes providing skill development training, financial assistance for setting up micro-enterprises, and market linkages to help them thrive in the business world. This component aims to empower individuals and create sustainable livelihoods for the community.

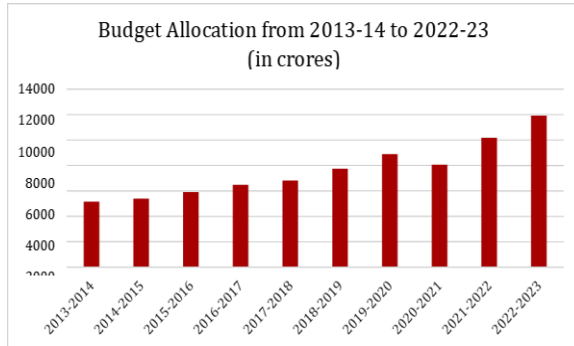
2.4. Infrastructure Development:

Recognizing the lack of basic infrastructure in many DNT settlements, SEED allocates funds for the construction and repair of community centres, hostels, and skill development centres. This investment aims to create conducive environments for educational and economic opportunities, fostering community development and social well-being. The SEED scheme marks a significant step towards empowering DNT communities. By addressing their educational, healthcare, and entrepreneurial needs, it offers a path to self-sufficiency and improved quality of life. Its success will depend on effective implementation, community participation, and a commitment to addressing long-standing challenges faced by these marginalized communities.

3. MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT, RECEIVES BUDGETARY BOOST

India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment saw a significant budget increase in the 2022-2023 financial year, receiving an allocation of Rs. 11,922.5 crores. This represents a hefty 14.6% jump compared to the previous year's budget of Rs. 10,180 crores. This boost signals the government's commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations within India. The Ministry oversees key social welfare programs aimed at marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and persons with disabilities. The increased budget allocation will likely support various initiatives focused on education, healthcare, livelihood advancement, and social inclusion. While specific

details haven't been released, this investment demonstrates the government's ongoing efforts to promote equity and create a more inclusive society.



4. SCHEMES FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF DNTS, SNTS, AND NTS IN INDIA

The Indian government recognizes the unique challenges faced by De-notified Tribes (DNTs), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs) and has implemented various schemes to address their educational, social, and economic needs. following some key initiatives are:

4. 1. Nanaji Deshmukh scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:

Hostel Scheme Aims to Bridge Education Gap for DNT Students Launched in 2014-15, this government-funded program helps De-notified Tribe (DNT) students access secondary and higher education by providing hostel facilities. DNT students who fall outside Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, or Other Backward Classes are eligible, with an annual income ceiling of Rs. 2 lakhs. The central government offers a maximum of 500 hostel seats each year across the country. Each seat costs around Rs. 3 lakhs, shared between the centre (75%) and state (25%) governments. An additional Rs. 5,000 per seat is provided for furniture. This scheme aims to address the challenge of limited accommodation options faced by DNT students, potentially hindering their pursuit of education. By providing safe and subsidized housing, the program seeks to create a more level playing field and promote educational opportunities for this marginalized community.

4.2 Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs:

Recognizing the unique needs of De-notified Tribes (DNTs), the government has launched a continuous scholarship scheme to support their education and improve their lives. This initiative addresses the gap in existing welfare programs, which typically benefit Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), leaving DNTs without specific support.

The scheme aims to empower DNT communities socially and economically by providing financial assistance for pre-matric and post-matric education. This intervention helps bridge the educational gap and create opportunities for DNT students to pursue higher studies and build brighter futures.

4.3 Mukhyamantri Swarozgar Yojana (Chief Minister's Self-Employment Scheme):

- Aims to support economic development for de-nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.
- Provides own employment opportunities through:
 - i. Margin money assistance: Up to Rs. 3 lakh (30% of project cost)
 - ii. Interest subsidy: 5% (6% for women) up to Rs. 25,000 per year for 7 years

4.4 Chief Minister's Economic Welfare Scheme:

- Targets the poorest sections of society, including nomadic communities.
- Offers low-cost equipment and working capital to start small businesses.
- Provides margin money assistance: Up to Rs. 15,000 (50% of project cost)

4.5 Delegated Caste Basti Development Scheme:

- Focuses on infrastructure development in settlements of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.
- Provides basic amenities like:
 - i. Paved roads and drainage
 - ii. Public toilets
 - iii. Drinking water systems
- Budget allocation in 2019-20: Rs. 700 lakhs

4.6 Electrification Scheme in Delegated Caste Settlements:

- Ensures electricity access in settlements with less than 100 people and no existing system.
- Implements infrastructure projects like:
 - i. Expanding power lines

- ii. Installing transformers
- iii. Mounting electrical equipment

These government schemes offer various forms of support to nomadic and marginalized communities, aiming to improve their economic well-being, access to basic amenities, and overall quality of life.

5. Recommendations:

1. Focus on market-relevant skills: Align program offerings with current job market demands in sectors like construction, hospitality, and IT.
2. Culturally sensitive methods: Design programs that respect and integrate traditional knowledge and values of DNT communities.
3. Strong linkages to employment and financial support: Provide robust job placement assistance, micro-loans, and other support mechanisms to ensure sustainable livelihoods.
4. Address systemic issues: Advocate for policies that combat social stigma and promote community participation in program development and implementation. By implementing these recommendations, skill development programs can become a powerful tool for empowering DNT youth in Madhya Pradesh, enabling them to build brighter futures and contribute meaningfully to society.

6. CONCLUSION

This research provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of skill development programs on DNT youth empowerment in Madhya Pradesh. Analysis of secondary data revealed both positive outcomes and challenges faced by DNT youth. Programs contributed to improved employability, income generation, and confidence in some cases. However, barriers like limited awareness, accessibility, and culturally insensitive program design hinder participation. Skill development programs hold significant potential to empower DNT youth in Madhya Pradesh, but their effectiveness requires tailoring to address the unique needs and challenges of this marginalized community.

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