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28th, April, 2022

Topic: Tribal Status

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- The Central Government has taken up the issue of giving tribal status to the Hatti community of Sirmaur district at the appropriate level and accorded priority to the issue neglected by the previous Congress Government.

About Hatti Community:

Who are the Hattis?

- The Hattis are a close-knit community who got their name from their tradition of selling homegrown vegetables, crops, meat and wool etc. at small markets called 'haat'

in towns.

- The Hatti Community, whose men generally wear a distinctive white headgear during ceremonies, is cut off from Sirmaur by two rivers called Giri and Tons. Tons divide it from the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand. The Hattis who live in the trans-Giri region and Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand were formerly part of Sirmaur's royal estate until the separation of Jaunsar Bawar in 1815.
- Because of the topographical disadvantages, the Hattis living in the regions of Kamrau, Sangrah and Shilliai are lagging behind in education and employment.
- The Hattis are governed by a traditional council called Khumbli, which, like the Haryana khaps, determines community affairs. The Khumbli's power has remained unchallenged despite the establishment of the panchayati raj system.

When did the Hattis start asking for tribal status?

- The community has made the demand since 1967, when tribal status was accorded to people living in the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand, which shares a border with Sirmaur district. Their demand for tribal status has grown stronger due to resolutions passed at various Maha Khumblis over the years.
- Incidentally, those who crossed over to the Jaunsar Bawar area, which is now in Uttarakhand enjoy tribal status since 1967. However, the Hatti community of the Himachal was not granted this status and that is when the struggle began.

How has the Hattis' case for ST status progressed so far?

- In 2016, then Congress Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh moved a file to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs asking for tribal status to the trans-Giri region, and Dodra Kwar in Rohru on the basis of a study conducted by the Tribal Affairs Institute, Shimla.
- The Union Ministry, however, said that the ethnographic report of the Hatti community was inadequate, and sought a full-fledged ethnographic study.
- In March this year, the Jai Ram Thakur government sent a detailed ethnographic proposal to the Union ministry, seeking the inclusion of the Hatti community of the trans-Giri area in the ST list of Himachal Pradesh. This week, Thakur met Home Minister Shah in New Delhi with his requests.

What are the criteria presently followed for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe?

- (i) Indications of primitive traits.
- (ii) Distinctive culture.
- (iii) Geographical isolation.
- (iv) Shyness of contact with the community at large.
- (v) Backwardness.

However, these criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution.

(Source: TheIndianExpress)

Topic: Uranium discovered in the Himachal

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- New uranium sites discovered between the districts of Hamirpur and Una.
- New sites rich in uranium were discovered between the districts of Hamirpur and Una of Himachal Pradesh, which with its tranquility is also known for its heavy metal deposits.

Where was it found first?

- ***Uranium mining was first detected during excavation operations in the village of Lambehra in the district of Hamirpur.***
- Uranium residues were found at various locations in Kunah and Pung Khad (small river), approximately 10 km from the Hamirpur district headquarters in Himachal Pradesh.
- The Himachal industry department claims that uranium deposits had been found at 11 locations, including Hamirpur. However, they are not yet listed by the Directorate of Atomic Minerals Exploration and Research (Hyderabad), the exploration branch of the Department of Atomic Energy.
- The heavy metal was detected in the village of Kasha in Nogli Valley, in the Rampur subdivision of Shimla District. However, uranium deposits in the villages of Kasha and Pat (collectively known as Kashapat) in Rampur Bushehr, a landlocked valley located 155 km east of the district headquarters, remain unexplored. The area between Kashapat and Darkrai is rich in minerals and precious Uranium, but due to lack of connectivity through road, the Uranium mines in the area remain

untapped.

- A few years ago, the Centre took the initiative to take the uranium out of the region, but it failed because of connectivity issues.

Una richest in Uranium:

- Kasha-Kaladi is the richest uranium belt in Shimla district, with an estimated 200 tonnes of triuranium octoxide (U₃O₈), a compound of uranium, which can produce 170 tonnes of the heavy metal.
- Tileli in Mandi district has 220 tonnes of triuranium octoxide (186 tonnes of Uranium).
- The largest deposit in the state with 364 tonnes of triuranium octoxide is in Rajpura, Una.
- Guleraia says anomalous radioactivity value has been detected near Ropa village in Kinnaur district, while small deposits have also been found in Batal and Wangtu.
- In Kullu district, Uranium has been traced in nine sites, including Chanjra, Dhara Kanola regions in the Parbati Valley, the Sajwar-Shakinandhar range, Hirub Giagai- Kkhalahandi in Kullu Banjar valley, Dharagardh, Nadhara, Kundli, and Panihar in Tirthan Valley and Bhatrang in the Pinrang Valley.
- HP's deposits rank 10th in the country
- Himachal Pradesh has the 10th largest Uranium deposits among the 11 states in the country where the heavy metal has been traced. Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Meghalaya hold the top three positions.

About Uranium:

- Uranium is a chemical element with the symbol U and atomic number 92. It is a silvery-grey metal in the

actinide series of the periodic table. A uranium atom has 92 protons and 92 electrons, of which 6 are valence electrons.

What is it used for?

- Uranium “enriched” into U-235 concentrations can be used as fuel for nuclear power plants and the nuclear reactors that run naval ships and submarines. It also can be used in nuclear weapons.

(Source: Hindustan times)

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