

Scheduled caste and their welfare

Scheduled castes are those castes/races in the country that suffer from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of age-old practice of untouchability and certain others on account of lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation, and who need special consideration for safeguarding their interests and for their accelerated socio-economic development. These communities were notified as Scheduled Castes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of Article 341 of the Constitution.

Constitutional mechanism for upliftment of SC

The deep concern of the framers of the Constitution for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes is reflected in the elaborate constitutional mechanism set-up for their uplift.

- Article 17 abolishes Untouchability.
- Article 46 requires the State 'to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- Article 335 provides that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
- Article 15(4) refers to the special provisions for their advancement.
- Article 16(4A) speaks of "reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of SCs/STs, which are not adequately represented in the services under the State'.
- Article 338 provides for a National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with duties to investigate and monitor all matters relating to safeguards provided for them, to inquire into specific complaints and to participate and advise on the planning process of their socio-economic development etc.
- Article 330 and Article 332 of the Constitution respectively provide for reservation of seats in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the legislative assemblies of the States. Under Part IX relating to the Panchayats and Part IXA of the Constitution relating to the Municipalities, reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in local bodies has been envisaged and provided.

The Constitution of India has prescribed, protection and safeguards for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections; either specially or the way of insisting on their general rights as citizens; with the object of promoting their educational and economic interests and removing social disabilities. These social groups have also been provided institutionalized commitments through the statutory body, the National Commission of SCs. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Ministry to oversee the interests of the Scheduled Castes.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal Ministry to oversee the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Though the primary responsibility for promotion of interests of the Scheduled Castes rests with all the Central Ministries in the area of their operations and the State Governments, the Ministry complements their efforts by way of interventions in critical sectors through specifically tailored schemes. The Scheduled Castes Development (SCD) Bureau of the Ministry aims to promote the welfare of Scheduled Castes through their educational, economic and social empowerment. Efforts made by State Governments and Central Ministries for protecting and promoting the interests of Scheduled Castes are also monitored.

Initiatives taken for SC development

Educational Empowerment

Various scholarships are provided to the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) to ensure that education is not denied due to the poor financial condition of their families. These Scholarships are provided at both pre-matric and post-matric levels. Scholarships are also provided to SC students for obtaining higher education in India and abroad, including premier educational institutions. The Scholarships can broadly be classified into the following three types:

- **Pre-Matric Scholarships** : The objective of the pre-matric Scheme is to support the parents of SC children for educating their wards, so that the incidence of drop outs at this stage is minimized.
- **Pre-Matric Scholarship to SC Student** : The objective of the pre-matric Scheme is to support the parents of SC children for educating their wards, so that the incidence of drop outs at this stage is minimized.
- **Pre-Matric Scholarship to the Children of those engaged in occupations involving cleaning and prone to health hazards:** This is also a centrally sponsored scheme, which is implemented by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, which receive 100% central assistance from the Government of India for the total expenditure under the scheme, over and above their respective Committed Liability.

- **Post Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Caste Students (PMS-SC)**: The Scheme is the single largest intervention by Government of India for educational empowerment of scheduled caste students. This is a centrally sponsored scheme. 100% central assistance is released to State Governments/UTs for expenditure incurred by them under the scheme over and above their respective committed liability.
- **Scholarships for obtaining Higher Education and Coaching Scheme**: These include:
 - **Top Class Education for Scheduled Caste Students** : The objective of the Scheme is to promote qualitative education amongst students belonging to Scheduled Castes, by providing full financial support for pursuing studies beyond 12th class, in notified institutes of excellence like IITs, NITs, IIMs, reputed Medical/Law and other institutions. Scholarship is awarded to the eligible SC students on securing admission in any of the institutions notified by the Ministry.
 - **National Fellowship**: The Scheme provides financial assistance to SC students for pursuing research studies leading to M.Phil, Ph.D and equivalent research degrees.
 - **National Overseas Scholarship**: The Scheme provides assistance to students belonging to SCs, de-notified, nomadic, semi-nomadic tribes etc for pursuing higher studies of Master level courses and PhD programmes abroad.
 - **Free Coaching for SC and OBC Students**: The objective of the Scheme is to provide coaching of good quality for economically disadvantaged SC and OBC candidates to enable them to appear in competitive examinations and succeed in obtaining an appropriate job in Public/Private sector. The Scheme provides central assistance to institutions/centres run by the Central/State Governments/UT Administrations, Central/ State Universities, PSUs, Registered Private Institutions, NGOs, etc. Coaching is provided for Group 'A' & 'B' examinations conducted by the UPSC, SSC, various Railway Recruitment Boards and State PSCs; Officers' Grade examinations conducted by Banks, Insurance Companies and PSUs; and Premier Entrance examinations for admission in Engineering, Medical and Professional courses like Management, Law etc.

Economic Empowerment:

- **National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC)**: Set up under the Ministry, to finance income generating activities of Scheduled Caste beneficiaries living below double the poverty line limits (presently Rs 98,000/- per annum for rural areas and Rs 1,20,000/- per annum for urban areas). NSFDC assists the target group by way of refinancing loans, skill training, Entrepreneurship Development Programmes and providing marketing support through State Channelizing Agencies, RRBs, Public Sector Bank and Other Institutions

- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)**: It is another corporation under the Ministry which provides credit facilities to beneficiaries amongst Safai Karamcharis, manual scavengers and their dependants for income generating activities for socio-economic development through State Channelizing Agencies
- **Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP)**: It is a policy initiative for development of Scheduled Castes in which 100 % assistance is given as an additive to SCSP of the States/ UTs on the basis of certain criteria such as SC population of the States/UTs, relative backwardness of States/UTs, percentage of SC families in the States/ UTs covered by composite economic development programmes in the State Plan to enable them to cross the poverty line, etc. It is an umbrella strategy to ensure flow of targeted financial and physical benefits from all the general sectors of development for the benefit of Scheduled Castes. Under this Scheme, the States /UTs are required to formulate and implement Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes as part of their annual plans by earmarking resources
- **Scheme of Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs)**: Share Capital contribution is released to the State Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs) under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in the ratio of 49:51 between Central Government and State Governments. There are in total 27 such State-level Corporations which are working for the economic development of Scheduled Castes, although some of these Corporations are also catering to the requirements of other weaker sections of the Society, e.g. Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Minorities etc. The main functions of SCDCs include identification of eligible SC families and motivating them to undertake economic development schemes, sponsoring the schemes to financial institutions for credit support, providing financial assistance in the form of the margin money at a low rate of interest, providing subsidy out of the funds made available to the States under the Scheme of Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan of the States to reduce the repayment liability and providing necessary tie up with other poverty alleviation programmes. The SCDCs are playing an important role in providing credit and missing inputs by way of margin money loans and subsidy to the target group. The SCDCs finance the employment oriented schemes covering diverse areas of economic activities which inter-alia include (i) agriculture and allied activities including minor irrigation (ii) small scale industry (iii) transport and (iv) trade and service sector
- **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes**: The objective of the fund is to promote entrepreneurship amongst the Scheduled Castes who are oriented towards innovation and growth technologies and to provide concessional finance to the scheduled caste entrepreneurs. The fund has been launched on 16.01.2015. During 2014-15, Rs.200

Crore were released initially for the Fund to IFCI Limited, which is a Nodal agency to implement it

- **Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes:** The objective of this Scheme is to provide credit guarantee facility to Young and start-up entrepreneurs, belonging to Scheduled Castes, who aspire to be part of neo middle class category, with an objective to encourage entrepreneurship in the lower strata of the Society resulting in job creation besides creating confidence in Scheduled Castes. The Scheme has been launched on 06.05.2015. Initially, Rs.200 Crore has been released under the Scheme to IFCI Limited, which is a Nodal agency to implement it.

Social Empowerment

- **The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955:** In pursuance of Article 17 of the Constitution of India, the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 was enacted and notified on 08.05.1955. Subsequently, it was amended and renamed in the year 1976 as the "Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955". Rules under this Act, viz "The Protection of Civil Rights Rules, 1977" were notified in 1977. The Act extends to the whole of India and provides punishment for the practice of untouchability. It is implemented by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Assistance is provided to States/ UTs for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** Assistance is provided to States/ UTs for implementation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Financial assistance is provided to the States/ UTs for implementation of these Acts, by way of relief to atrocity victims, incentive for inter-caste marriages, awareness generation, setting up of exclusive Special courts, etc.
- **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995:** PoA Rules were amended in June 2014 for enhancing the relief amount to the victims of atrocities to become between Rs.75,000/- to Rs. 7,50,000/- depending upon the nature of an offence. Further Amendment done in the Principal Rules namely the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 by the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Rules, 2016 have been notified in the Gazette of India Extraordinary on 14th April, 2016.
- **The 'Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013' (MS Act, 2013):** Eradication of dry latrines and manual scavenging and rehabilitation of manual scavengers in alternative occupation has been an area of high priority for the Government. Towards this end, a multi-pronged strategy was followed, consisting of the following legislative as well as programmatic interventions:

1. Enactment of “Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993(1993 Act);”
2. Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) Scheme for conversion of dry latrines into sanitary latrines in urban areas; and
3. Launching of National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers (NSLRS).
4. Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.

In spite of the above measures taken by the Government, manual scavenging continued to exist which became evident with the release of 2011 the Census data indicating existence of more than 26 lakh insanitary latrines in the country. Therefore, Government decided to enact another law to cover all types of insanitary latrines and situations which give occasion for manual scavenging. The ‘Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013’ (MS Act, 2013) was passed by the Parliament in September, 2013 and has come into force from 6th December, 2013. This Act intends to, inter alia, achieve its objectives to:

1. Identify and eliminate the insanitary latrines.
2. Prohibit:- i) Employment as Manual Scavengers and ii) Hazardous manual cleaning of sewer and septic tanks
3. Identify and rehabilitate the manual scavengers.

Other Schemes:

Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY): The Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme ‘Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana’ (PMAGY) is being implemented for integrated development of Scheduled Castes (SC) majority villages having SC Population concentration > 50%. Initially the scheme was launched in 1000 villages in 5 States viz. Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The Scheme was further revised w.e.f. 22.01.2015 and extended to 1500 SC majority villages in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Odisha. The principal objective of the Scheme is integrated development of SC Majority Villages:

1. Primarily through convergent implementation of the relevant Central and State Schemes;
2. By providing these villages Central Assistance in form of gap-filling funds to the extent of Rs.20.00 lakh per village, to be increased by another 5 lakh if State make a matching contribution.
3. By providing gap-filling component to take up activities which do not get covered under the existing Central and State Government Schemes are to be taken up under the component of ‘gap filling’.

- ***Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna:*** The primary objective of the Scheme is to attract implementing agencies for undertaking hostel construction programme with a view to provide hostel facilities to SC boys and girls studying in middle schools, higher secondary schools, colleges and universities. The Scheme provides central assistance to State Governments/ UT Administrations, Central & State Universities/ Institutions for fresh construction of hostel buildings and for expansion of the existing hostel facilities. The NGOs and Deemed Universities in private sector are eligible for central assistance only for expansion of their existing hostels facilities.

Schedules Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP)

Under the Scheduled Castes Development Bureau, the Ministry implements Schedules Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) which is an umbrella strategy to ensure flow of targeted financial and physical benefits from all the general sectors of development for the benefit of Scheduled Castes. Under the strategy, States/UTs are required to formulate and implement Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes as part of their Annual Plans by earmarking resources. At present 27 States/UTs having sizeable SC population are implementing Schedules Caste Sub-Plan.

Objective of the Scheme

1. The main objective is to give a thrust to family oriented schemes of economic development of SCs below the poverty line, by providing resources for filling the critical gaps and for providing missing vital inputs so that the schemes can be more meaningful. Since the schemes / programmes for SCs may be depending upon the local occupational pattern and the economic activities available, the States/UTs have been given full flexibility in utilizing SCA with the only condition that it should be utilized in conjunction with SCP and other resources available from other sources like various Corporations, financial institution etc.
2. State Government have been given flexibility in choice of schemes to be implemented out of Special Central Assistance, within the overall frame work of the scheme.

Special Central Assistance

- Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) is a central scheme under which 100% grant is given to the States/UTs as an additive to their Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP)

Stand Up India Scheme

The Stand up India scheme aims at promoting entrepreneurship among women and scheduled castes and tribes. The scheme is anchored by Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Stand-Up India Scheme facilitates bank loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise. This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector. In case of non-individual enterprises at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or woman entrepreneur.

Eligibility

- SC/ST and/or woman entrepreneurs, above 18 years of age.
- Loans under the scheme is available for only green field project. Green field signifies, in this context, the first time venture of the beneficiary in the manufacturing or services or trading sector.
- In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneur.

Borrower should not be in default to any bank/financial institution.

MINORITY

Schemes for Minority

Government has taken following initiatives for the welfare and upliftment of the minority communities:-

- **USTAAD:-** The Scheme aims at upgrading Skills and Training in preservation of traditional Ancestral Arts/Crafts of minorities.
- **Hamari Darohar:-** The Scheme aims to preserve rich heritage of minority communities in context of Indian culture.
- **Khwaza Garib Nawaz Senior Secondary School** will be established at Ajmer by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to give a fillip to minority education.
- **Nai Manzil:** A bridge course to bridge the academic and skill development gaps of the deeni Madrasa passouts with their mainstream counterparts.
- **Strengthening of State Wakf Boards:** The scheme envisages to provide assistance for meeting the training and administrative cost of State Wakf Boards, removal of

encroachment from Waqf Properties and also strengthening of Zonal/Regional offices of Waqf Boards.

The government has taken the following steps to ensure that these benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

- The Scholarship Schemes have been restructured to allow for greater transparency and accountability during processing and sanction.
- To help evaluation of flow of benefits, segregated data for the different minority communities is being sought from all Ministries. The states/UTs have also been requested to provide better and timely feedback.
- The scholarship schemes are reviewed regularly through interaction with the State Governments at regular intervals and field visits by the Ministry officials.
- The Online Scholarship Management System (OSMS) earlier introduced for the Merit-cum-Means scholarship scheme has now been extended to Post Matric scholarship scheme.

Nai Roshni

The scheme is envisaged to reach out to women through nongovernmental organizations who will be provided with financial support for conducting leadership development trainings so that women are empowered and emboldened to move out of the confines of home and community and assume leadership roles and assert their rights collectively or individually.

Scholarship Schemes

Students belonging to notified minority communities viz. Muslim / Christian / Sikh / Buddhist / Jain / Parsi (Zoroastrian) studying in India only and fulfilling the Scheme guidelines are eligible to apply for these scholarships.

Free Coaching & Allied Scheme (for Competitive Examinations of Professional Courses and Government jobs)

- The scheme aims to empower the minority communities by assisting the economically weaker sections of students among them through coaching institutions for enhancing their skills and capabilities to make them employable in industries, services and business sectors in addition to the government sector. It has built-in resilience to adapt to the market dynamics on a continuous basis so that the target groups are not deprived of the professional acumen demanded by the changing/emerging market needs and opportunities for employment at domestic as well as international levels.

- Separate schemes for providing coaching to students belonging to scheduled caste, minority communities and backward classes were being implemented from 6th Five Year Plan. These separate schemes were amalgamated with effect from September 2001 into a combined Scheme of Coaching and Allied Assistance for Weaker Sections including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities. After creation of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, a new scheme called "Free Coaching & Allied Scheme for candidates belonging to minority communities has been formulated keeping in view the emerging trends of employment in the era of economic reforms, liberalization and globalization.

Objectives

The objectives of the scheme are to assist students belonging to minority communities by way of special coaching for the following:-

1. Qualifying examinations for admission in technical/professional courses such as engineering, law, medical, management, information technology etc and language/aptitude examinations for seeking admission in foreign universities.
2. Competitive examinations for recruitment to Group 'A', 'B', 'C and 'D' services and other equivalent posts under the Central and State governments including police/security forces, public sector undertakings, Railways, banks, insurance companies as well as autonomous bodies; and
3. Coaching for jobs in the private sector such as in airlines, shipping, information technology (IT), business process outsourcing (BPO) and other IT enabled services, hospitality, tours and travels, maritime, food processing, retail, sales & marketing, bio-technology and other job oriented courses as per the emerging trend of employment.
4. Remedial coaching at undergraduate and post graduate level to improve the academic knowledge and enable the student to catch up with the rest of the class and complete the course successfully.

Seekho aur Kamao (Learn & Earn)

Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India on 23 September 2013 launched a central sector scheme for Skill Development of Minorities

Main Objectives

- To bring down unemployment rate of minorities during 12th Plan period (2012-17).
- To conserve and update traditional skills of minorities and establish their linkages with the market.
- To improve employability of existing workers, school dropouts etc and ensure their placement.
- To generate means of better livelihood for marginalised minorities and bring them in the mainstream.

- To enable minorities to avail opportunities in the growing market.
- To develop potential human resource for the country.

Jiyo Parsi

Jiyo Parsi, the Central Sector Scheme for containing population decline of Parsis in India was launched on 23 September 2013 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India.

Objectives

The main objective of the Jiyo parsi scheme is to reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by adopting scientific protocol and structured interventions, stabilize the Parsi population and increase the population of Parsis in India.

Main features

- 100 percent funded by Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India.
- Medical interventions under Standard Medical protocols in empanelled hospitals/clinics.
- Confidentiality of the patients to be given utmost importance.

Target groups

- The scheme is meant for only Parsis community.
- Parsi married couples of child bearing age who seek assistance.
- Adults/young men/women/adolescent boys/girls for detection of diseases resulting with consent of parents/legal guardians.

Padho Pardesh (for overseas studies at Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. Level)

Government of India, Ministry of Minority Affairs has now introduced a new scheme for providing 'interest subsidy' for minority students for overseas studies. This scheme came into force from 2013-14. The loan for overseas studies for specific courses should have been sanctioned by the bank under IBA model scheme. The annual income of the parents should be less than 6 lakhs.

If the student is eligible, the Government of India provides full interest subsidy during the moratorium period. (course period plus one year or six months after getting employment, whichever is earlier).

Nalanda Scheme

Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has launched the Nalanda Project for Minorities Higher Educational Institutions on 4 March 2014.

Nalanda Project is an innovative Faculty Development Program of Union Ministry of Minority Affairs. The Nalanda Project is being taken up at Aligarh Muslim University, a

premier Minority University of world fame. The Aligarh Muslim University is also a Nodal Staff College of University Grant Commission.

Minority Cyber Gram

The MCG programme seeks to introduce digital literacy skills in identified minority clusters in India through designated Digital Fellows towards knowledge empowerment and entitlement gains of minority focused groups and beneficiaries.

Background

With basic literacy level low among the backward sections of the minorities, the social and economic profile is further aggravated due to lack of basic digital skills and knowledge to derive advantages from digital tools, devices, platforms and knowledge networks. In order to mainstream minority groups and communities with national development goals and objectives, it is extremely important and relevant to deploy and introduce digital literacy skills to get benefits in knowledge based networks and in public schemes and other services through information empowerment.

Objectives

- To impart digital literacy and skills among identified minority groups and beneficiaries through designated Digital Fellows (DFs) in identified minority clusters for information and knowledge empowerment and entitlement gains.
- To provide opportunities in information and knowledge networks for local communities.

Maulana Azad Sehat scheme

- Under the scheme, Sehat Card will be issued to every student of the Institution financially aided by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF).
- Preventive Health Check-up Camps will be organized by the Institute twice in a year, through government or private hospitals or nursing homes.
- All findings of the preventive health checkups will be entered in the Sehat Card of the student by the doctors.
- In exceptional and deserving cases for serious ailments the poor students belonging to notified minorities will be provided financial assistance for the treatment in government or recognized hospitals. Serious ailments of kidney, heart, liver cancer and brain or any life threatening diseases including knee and spinal surgery will be covered.
- A dispensary or health care centre is to be set up in the educational institutions (school) to provide daily medical facilities to the students studying in the educational institutions funded or aided by MAEF.