

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1843
ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

REDUCTION IN BUDGET ALLOCATION

1843: SHRI M. BADRUDDIN AJMAL:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the budget allocation has been decreased for the Ministry despite the fact that minorities are in dire need of welfare as well as educational schemes and if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether it is true that a large number of students from minority communities were unable to avail the benefit of scholarship despite fulfilling the criteria just because of lack of fund;
- (c) if so, whether reduction in budget allocation would lead to deprivation of more students; and
- (d) if so, the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a): The Government implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every strata, including minorities, specially the economically weaker and lesser privileged sections of the society, through various schemes of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Ministry of Jal Shakti etc.

2. Ministry of Minority Affairs specifically implements various schemes across the country for socio- economic and educational empowerment of the six (6) centrally notified minority communities. These schemes give representation to all weaker segments of society including minorities. The Schemes/ programmes implemented by the Ministry during the last five years are as under:

A. Educational Empowerment schemes

- (1) Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme
- (2) Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme
- (3) Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Scheme

B. Employment and Economic Empowerment Schemes

- (4) Pradhan Mantri Virasat ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS)
- (5) Equity to National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) for providing concessional loans to Minorities

C. Special Schemes

- (6) Jiyo Parsi: A Scheme for reversing the population decline of Parsis in India
- (7) Quami Waqf Board Taraqqiati Scheme (QWBTS) and Shahari Waqf Sampatti Vikas Yojana (SWSVY)
- (8) Research/Studies, Dissemination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Schemes including Publicity

D. Infrastructure Development Schemes

- (9) Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)

3. The budget of the schemes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs was reduced due to the following reasons:

(i) Adoption of new mechanism for release of Central share of funds under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes, for which State Nodal Agencies (SNA) and Central Nodal Agencies (CNA) were required to be appointed. As per the revised procedure of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, release of funds under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) are not tied to the individual projects and the amount available in the account of State Nodal Agency (SNA) forms a common pool. As on 1.12.2023, the unspent amount with the States is ₹ 1515.91 crore, and the States are required to first incur expenditure from the SNA account, to complete the ongoing projects.

(ii) Scholarship schemes of the Ministry were to be aligned with the pattern followed by the Education Ministry and other ministries such as Tribal Affairs and Social Justice. Central Government had taken the decision to limit the coverage under Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Minorities to only Classes IX and X based on very strong rationale. Firstly, it was observed that the participation of students from Minority communities is at par with the national average at primary and elementary level. Also, the students at these levels are already covered under Right to Education (RTE) Act. Further, there was a felt need to harmonize the coverage under Pre-Matric Scheme for minorities with similar schemes implemented for other target groups like Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and the OBCs.

(iii) The two flagship schemes of the Ministry –Scholarship Scheme and PMJVK Scheme together account for nearly 80% of the Ministry’s budget.

(iv) The Government has taken a decision to discontinue the following schemes from the Financial Year 2022-23:-

- a. Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Minority students
- b. Padho Pardesh
- c. Free Coaching and Allied Schemes (Naya Savera)
- d. Nai Udaan Scheme - Support for Minority Students clearing Prelims conducted by Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), State Public Service Commissions (SPSCs)

(v) Skilling schemes (Skill Development Initiative, USTTAD, NAI Manzil, Hamari Dharohar and Scheme for Leadership Development of Minority women) under Ministry of Minority Affairs have been amalgamated under the PM Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS).

(b) to (d). The Ministry of Minority Affairs implements the following Scholarship Schemes for students belonging to any of the 6 Notified Minority Communities viz. Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian (Parsi) are eligible to apply for scholarships under the below mentioned Scholarship Schemes:-

i. Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme - Scholarship is provided to students studying in Class IX and X level in Government/recognized Private schools. Minimum 30% scholarships are earmarked for girls. To be eligible, students should not have annual parental/guardian’s income of more than ₹ 1.00 lakh and he/she should have secured minimum 50% marks in previous class.

ii. Post Matric Scholarship Scheme - Scholarship is provided to students studying in Class XI to Ph.D level in Government/recognized Private schools/Colleges/Institutes. Minimum 30% scholarships are earmarked for girls. To be eligible, students should not have annual parental/guardian’s income of more than ₹ 2.00 lakh and he/she should have secured minimum 50% marks in previous class.

iii. Merit-cum-Mean based Scholarship Scheme - The scholarship is awarded for pursuing professional and technical courses at under-graduate and post-graduate levels, in institutions recognized by the appropriate authority. Under the scheme, 30% Scholarships are earmarked for girl students. 85 institutes for professional and technical courses have been listed in the scheme; for which full course fee is reimbursed. To be eligible, students should not have annual parental/guardian’s income of more than ₹ 2.50 lakh and he/she should have secured minimum 50% marks in previous class.

2. Based on the study report and physical verification conducted through a third-party agency, it has been found that gross irregularities with instances where benefit of Scholarship Schemes is not reaching to the targeted beneficiaries. Accordingly, Ministry took the

following steps to ensure that such cases should not be repeated and systemic changes and due diligence can be brought about for streamlining the scheme:

- Ministry referred the matter to CBI for thorough investigation and FIR has been registered by CBI on 28.08.2023.
- Subsequently, Ministry also conducted a drive for Aadhaar based bio authentication of all verifying officers and verified applicants during the period 01.08.2023 to 22.09.2023, by engaging CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd through a dedicated utility based on the data on National Scholarship portal (NSP) and Aadhaar.

3. The Government has sufficient funds under the relevant budget head to meet the requirement for disbursement of scholarship.
