

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:81  
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2000  
PROTECTION OF EQUALITY OF RIGHTS  
RATTAN LAL KATARIA

**Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government are committed to provide equal rights for all in power, prosperity and dignity; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to protect the various constitutional rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes provided under the Constitution?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
SMT. MANEKA GANDHI

(a) Yes Sir,

(b) The Constitutional guarantees for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are sought to be effectively and meaningfully ensured through their educational, economic and social development. Special efforts are being made by the Govt. to improve literacy and access to education at all levels through affirmative action programmes. Increased economic opportunities are being developed through focused rural and urban poverty alleviation programmes and access to soft loans. Enhanced allocation of resources is made by States and Union Govt. to areas with concentration of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes population through the Tribals Sub Plan and Special Component Plan strategies to improve infrastructure activities and accelerate development of these areas. Legislation has also been enacted to protect the civil rights of persons belonging to SCs and STs to prevent atrocities, abolish bonded labour and prevent land alienation. There is reservation of seats in Panchayati Raj institutions, local bodies, state legislatures and Parliament to provide for representation in public life in proportion to population as well as reservation in posts and services under the Central and State Governments for SCs and STs. Besides, under Article 338 of the Constitution, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been constituted to provide a high level independent body to monitor the safeguards provided to SCs and STs and also review and report on the issues concerning them.