

44

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(2013-2014)**

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS

**WORKING OF ASHRAM SCHOOLS IN
TRIBAL AREAS
FORTY-FOURTH REPORT**



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February, 2014/Magha, 1935(Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.02.2014

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.02.2014



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February, 2014/Magha, 1935(Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2012-2013)**

SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri M. Anandan
3. Smt. Susmita Bauri
4. Shri Devidhan Besra
5. Shri Tarachand Bhagora
6. Smt. Rama Devi
7. Shri Gorakh Prasad Jaiswal
8. Shri Mohan Jena
9. Shri Dinesh Kashyap
10. Shri Kirodi Lal Meena
11. Kumari Meenakshi Natarajan
- #12. Smt. Mausam Noor
13. Shri Wakchaure Bhausahab R.

14. Smt. Sushila Saroj
15. Shri N. Dharam Singh
16. Shri Pradeep Kumar Singh
17. Dr. Naramalli Sivaprasad
18. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya
19. Shri Kabir Suman
20. Vacant
21. Vacant

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
23. Shri Avtar Singh Karimpuri
- *24. Shri Rishang Keishing
25. Shri Mangala Kisan
26. Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi

27. Prof. Mrinal Miri
- ##28. Shri Jesudasu Seelam
29. Shri Mohammad Shafi
30. Shri Shivpratap Singh
31. Shri Shankarbhai N. Vegad

* Resigned from the Committee w.e.f. 22.2.2013

Nominated w.e.f. 01.5.2013

Shri Jesudasu Seelam ceased to be a Member w.e.f. 17.6.2013 consequent upon his appointment as Minister.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Devender Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Anita Jain - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director
4. Shri Yash Pal Sharma - Senior Executive Assistant

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2013-2014)**

SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL - CHAIRMAN

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LOK SABHA**

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5. Shri Tarachand Bhagora
6. Smt. Rama Devi
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8. Shri Mohan Jena
9. Shri Dinesh Kashyap
- *10. Shri Madhu Kora
- ##11. Shri Kirodi Lal Meena
12. Kumari Meenakshi Natarajan
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20. Shri Kabir Suman
21. Vacant

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

- **22. Shri K.R. Arjunan
23. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
24. Shri Avtar Singh Karimpuri
25. Shri Mangala Kisan
- #26. Dr. V. Maitreyan
27. Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi
28. Prof. Mrinal Miri
29. Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Roy
30. Shri Mohammad Shafi
31. Shri Shivpratap Singh
32. Shri Shankarbhai N. Vegad

* Shri Madhu Kora nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 18.9.2013.

** Shri K.R. Arjunan nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 7.9.2013.

Dr. V. Maitreyan ceased to be a Member of Committee w.e.f. 7.9.2013.

Ceased to be Member consequent upon his resignation from Lok Sabha w.e.f. December, 2013.

19th

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Devender Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Anita Jain - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director
4. Shri Yash Pal Sharma - Senior Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2013-14) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Forty-fourth Report on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

2. The Committee took the evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on 20.5.2013 and 8.10.2013. The Committee also undertook on-the-spot study visits and interacted with the Chief Secretaries of Tripura and Maharashtra in connection with the working of Ashram Schools and the trends of literacy levels of the tribals. The observations of the Committee are based on the appraisal of the evidence of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs as also on the deliberations made and the information gleaned during the study visits.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the Draft Report on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" at their sitting held on 13th February, 2014.

4. The Committee wish to express their sincerest thanks to the officials of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, State Governments of Tripura and Maharashtra for their cooperation in placing before them the information sought and their considered views on the subject. I also place on record my deepest appreciation of the sustained hard work done and the valuable service rendered by the officers and staff of the Committee Secretariat.

5. For facility of reference, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report. I am quite sanguine that the recommendations made in this Report about, and for improving the functioning of, the Ashram Schools will help consolidate empirical statistics, formulate more efficient policy planning and accelerate literacy level of the tribals in a significant way.

NEW DELHI;

13 February, 2014
24 Magha, 1935 (Saka)

HEMANAND BISWAL
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

REPORT

PART - A

Introductory

1.1 Education is the key to all round human development. A nation's economic, social and cultural progress is determined by the education development of its citizens. India is a pluralist country with rich diversity reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions and languages of various groups. There is however large disparity in the socio-economic parameters of various groups/communities residing in the country. Some groups notably the Scheduled Tribes have been traditionally marginalized and economically backward in relation to the total population of the country. Educational development is the most effective instrument for their empowerment and has the potential to help the marginalized and the poor to come out of the poverty trap and facilitate them to be at par with the rest of the citizens.

1.2 Recognizing the importance of education, the Government of India has been initiating efforts to achieve education for all, particularly to the groups which have lagged on the economic scale. A major step was taken in 2002 when by virtue of the 86th amendment to the Constitution Article 21A was inserted making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age group as fundamental right. In pursuance thereof, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme was launched for achievement of universal elementary education in a time bound manner. It had a special focus on education of tribal children. Recently the Right to Education (RTE) of children to free and compulsory

education was enacted on 04.08.2009 which describes the modalities of importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 to 14 years.

1.3 The Scheduled Tribes are one of the principal categories of backward classes or historically disadvantaged bottom groups of society. Despite the Government initiatives and efforts to promote education among STs, the literacy rate among STs as compared to national average has remained low and the female literacy rate has been still lower compared to national female literacy rate.

1.4 The following table (No. 1.4) gives a comparison of literacy rate among STs and all social groups during the period from 1961 to 2001 and the existing gap:

Year	STs percentage			All Social Groups			Gap %
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1961	13.83	3.16	8.53	40.40	15.35	28.30	19.77
1971	17.63	4.85	11.30	45.96	21.97	34.45	23.15
1981	24.52	8.04	16.35	56.38	29.76	43.57	27.22
1991	40.65	18.19	29.60	64.13	39.29	52.21	22.61
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10	75.26	53.67	64.84	17.74
2011	68.53	49.35	58.96	80.89	64.64	72.99	14.03

1.5 The literacy rate for the total population in India has increased from 28.30% to 72.99 % during the period from 1961 to 2011 whereas the literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes has increased from 8.53 % to 58.96%. Among ST males literacy increased from

13.83 % to 68.53% and female literacy increased from 3.16 % to 49.35% during the same period. It is seen that the percentage gap in literacy rate, which was 19.77% in 1961, increased to 27.22% in 1981, though there has been reduction in gap to 14.03% in 2011.

1.6 The State-wise literacy rates for Scheduled Tribe and general population as per 2011 census is enclosed in Table 1.6.

**Table 1.6 : Literacy rate for general population and STs as per Census 2011,
State/UT-wise and gender-wise**

S.No.	India/ State/ UT	Literacy Rate (%) 2011 (general population)			Literacy Rate (%) 2011 (STs)		
		Person	Males	Females	Person	Males	Females
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	67.02	74.88	59.15	49.21	58.35	40.09
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	65.38	72.55	57.7	64.58	71.48	57.96
3	ASSAM	72.19	77.85	66.27	72.06	78.96	65.10
4	BIHAR	61.8	71.2	51.5	51.08	61.31	40.38
5	CHHATTISGARH	70.28	80.27	60.24	59.09	69.67	48.76
6	GOA	88.7	92.65	84.66	79.14	87.16	71.53
7	GUJARAT	78.03	85.75	69.68	62.48	71.68	53.16
8	HARYANA	75.55	84.06	65.94	-	-	-
9	HIMACHAL PRADESH	82.8	89.53	75.93	73.64	83.17	64.20
10	JAMMU & KASHMIR	67.16	76.75	56.43	50.56	60.58	39.73
11	JHARKHAND	66.41	76.84	55.42	57.13	68.17	46.20
12	KARNATAKA	75.36	82.47	68.08	62.08	70.14	52.98
13	KERALA	94	96.11	92.07	75.81	80.76	71.08
14	MADHYA PRADESH	69.32	78.73	59.24	50.55	59.55	41.47
15	MAHARASHTRA	82.34	88.38	75.87	65.73	74.27	57.02
16	MANIPUR	79.21	86.06	72.37	77.36	82.08	72.71
17	MEGHALAYA	74.43	75.95	72.89	74.53	75.54	73.55
18	MIZORAM	91.33	93.35	89.27	91.51	93.59	89.47
19	NAGALAND	79.55	82.75	76.11	80.04	83.11	76.91
20	ODISHA	72.87	81.59	64.01	52.24	63.70	41.20
21	PUNJAB	75.84	80.44	70.73	-	-	-
22	RAJASTHAN	66.11	79.19	52.12	52.80	67.62	37.27
23	SIKKIM	81.42	86.55	75.61	79.74	85.01	74.27
24	TAMIL NADU	80.09	86.77	73.44	54.34	61.8111	46.80
25	TRIPURA	87.22	91.53	82.73	79.05	86.43	71.59
26	UTTAR PRADESH	67.68	77.28	57.18	55.68	67.08	43.72
27	UTTARAKHAND	78.82	87.4	70.01	73.88	83.56	63.89
28	WEST BENGAL	76.26	81.69	70.54	57.93	68.17	47.71
UNION TERRITORY							
29	ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	86.63	90.27	82.43	75.58	80.87	69.92
30	CHANDIGARH	86.05	89.99	81.19	-	-	-
31	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	76.24	85.17	64.32	61.85	73.62	50.27
32	DAMAN & DIU	87.1	91.54	79.55	78.79	86.23	71.23
33	NCT OF DELHI	86.21	90.94	80.76	-	-	-
34	LAKSHADWEEP	91.85	95.56	87.95	91.70	95.69	87.76
35	PUDUCHERRY	85.85	91.26	80.67	-	-	-
	INDIA	72.99	80.89	64.64	58.96	68.53	49.35

1.7 It has been observed from Table 1.6 that as per 2011 Census the percentage of literacy gap between STs and general population varies from State to State. A scrutiny of data of literacy rates among STs in various States reveals that in most of the north eastern States viz. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, STs are at par with general population while in some of the other States viz. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which have sizeable ST population in remote areas, the literacy gap is still as high as 18 to 26 percent.

1.8 The Ministry of HRD is mandated to promote education in the country and take initiatives/measures to improve opportunities of education of disadvantaged group. The Ministry of HRD has addressed the issue of education deprivation of ST children through creating better provisions, relaxing norms for opening primary schools in tribal hamlets, establishing residential facilities, opening Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs) in tribal areas, etc. Besides, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs makes all efforts to supplement the efforts of Ministry of HRD, which is the line Ministry, and the State Governments/UT Administrations by administering various schemes with the objective of enhancing access to education through provision of infrastructure by way of construction of hostels for ST students, Establishment of Ashram Schools, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Vocational Training Centre as well as to maximize retention of ST students within the various stages of school education and promoting higher learning by providing monetary incentives in the form of scholarships such as Pre Matric Scholarship, Post Matric Scholarship (PMS), Scholarship for Top Class Education, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and National Overseas Scholarship for ST students.

Ashram Schools

1.9 Ashram Schools are residential schools imparting primary, middle and secondary education to ST boys and girls. The Ashram Schools which are run by State Governments have been an important tool to give formal education to ST children at the elementary level. The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986 and the Programme for Action Plan, 1992 accord priority for establishment of Ashram schools on a large scale.

1.10 In a query about the number of Ashram Schools in the country, State-wise, the Ministry of Human Resource Development informed that Ashram Schools are not operated by them. However, with the notification of RTE Act, Ashram Schools have come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms and standards. On the same issue, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs apprised the Committee that information on the number of Ashram Schools functioning in the Tribal areas and funded entirely by the State Governments is being collected.

Central scheme of 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas'

1.11 To supplement the efforts of State Governments, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing a scheme 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas' under which grant-in-aid is given to States for construction of school buildings. The Scheme is in operation since 1990-91 and has been revised with effect from the financial year 2008-09.

1.12 Giving details of the salient features of the scheme, the Ministry stated as under :-

- The scheme is operational in the Tribal Sub-Plan States/UT Administrations. Twenty two (22) States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal and two (02) Union Territories i.e. Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Daman & Diu are identified as Tribal Sub-Plan Areas for implementing the scheme.
- The scheme allows for construction of Ashram Schools for the primary, middle, secondary and senior secondary stages of education as well as upgradation of existing Ashram Schools for Scheduled Tribe boys and girls including PTGs.
- 100% funding for establishment of Ashram Schools i.e. school buildings, hostels, kitchen and staff quarters for girls in TSP areas. In addition, 100% funding for establishment of Ashram Schools for boys in only the TSP areas, (if any), of the Naxal affected districts identified by Ministry of Home Affairs from time to time. All other Ashram Schools for boys in TSP States continue to be funded on 50:50 basis. 100% funding will be provided to UTs.
- Financial assistance on 50:50 basis given for other non-recurring items of expenditure i.e. purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishing, purchase of a few sets of books for a small library for use of inmates of the hostels, etc.

- The scheme is need-based and demand-driven and funds are released on receipt of proposals indicating the mandatory details from States Governments/UTs, and subject to availability of funds under the scheme. Therefore, there is no State-wise allocation under the scheme.
- While the Ministry of Tribal Affairs administers the scheme and releases grant-in-aid for construction of buildings and procuring equipment, furniture, books etc., the maintenance and running of Ashram Schools is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration concerned.
- The Ashram Schools are required to be completed within a period of 2 years from the date of release of the Central assistance. However, for the extension of existing Ashram Schools period of construction is 12 months.

Mode of Operation of the scheme

1.13 The State Governments/UT Administrations are required to submit their proposals to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs annually. The proposals are to be accompanied by the following documents :-

- Plan of the Ashram School along with the location, duly approved by the Competent Authority in the State Government/UT Administration. The plan must indicate a layout of the compound, including the kitchen, vegetable garden and plantation (fruits and nutritional trees like moringa, citrus) areas. States are encouraged to use fuel saving or renewable energy technologies in the school by availing schemes of the Ministry of New and Renewal Energy.

- A certificate to the effect that matching provision exists in the State Budget for the scheme, wherever necessary.
- Unencumbered land will be made available free of cost by the concerned State Government for construction of an Ashram School.
- State Governments will bear the required matching share of cost of the building based on the current scheduled rates of State PWD or CPWD rates.
- The location of new Ashram Schools and the admission policy should be so decided as to give priority to Scheduled Tribe Girls, Children of Primitive Tribal Groups and migrant Scheduled Tribes.
- Utilization Certificate and Physical Progress Report in respect of grants released during previous years.
- A few rooms/blocks of the hostels should be constructed barrier free and facilities like ramps, etc. should be included in the design of the construction for the convenience of the ST students with disabilities.
- In case, any State Government is unable to provide the required matching share from its budget, any MP/MLA can provide the State's share from his/her MPLADS/MLALADS fund.
- Preference will be given to State Governments who commit annual maintenance expenditure, as per reasonable norms.

1.14 As per data provided, 862 Ashram Schools have been sanctioned in various part of the country under the scheme of 'Establishment of Ashram School in Tribal-sub Plan areas'.

1.15 The Committee desired to know enquired that, how many schools, out of 862 Ashram Schools sanctioned, have been constructed and by what time the rest of the schools will be constructed. The Ministry submitted the information only regarding the completed Ashram Schools since the running of the Ashram schools after completion is the responsibility of concerned State Govt/UT Administration. The status of completion of 862 Ashram Schools sanctioned by the Ministry is given in Table 1.15

Table 1.15 : Status of Ashram Schools

Sl.	Name of the State Govt.	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned	No. of Ashram Schools completed	No. of Ashram Schools incomplete
1.	Andhra Pradesh	78	41	37
2.	Chhattisgarh	134	73	61
3.	Gujarat	164	154	10
4.	Goa	1	0	1
5.	Jharkhand	2	0	2
6.	Karnataka	19	17	2
7.	Kerala	11	7	4
8.	Madhya Pradesh	242	172	70
9	Maharashtra	87	87	0
10	Orissa	82	52	30
11	Rajasthan	9	0	9
12	Tripura	19	3	16
13	Uttrakhand	12	10	2
14	Uttar Pradesh	02	0	2
	Total	862	616	246

1.16 When asked about the functioning of the Ashram Schools, the Ministry informed as under :-

"The running of Ashram Schools constructed under the scheme of "Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" is squarely the responsibility of the concerned State Governments/UT Administration. Such responsibility on the part of the concerned State Governments/UT Administration encompass the areas of teachers' recruitment, students' enrollment, syllabus, affiliation to the Education Board, Management of dropout rates and general functioning of the schools. The Ministry, however, keeps a watch over the benefits accruing to the target group and emphasizes upon State Governments from time to time and also in meetings with State Governments for providing all necessary facilities to ST students like drinking water, bedding and mattress, good quality of food, toilets, basic amenities like fans, hand pumps, security arrangements, laboratory, library, computer room, watchman, sweeper and health check-up of students".

State-wise sanction of Ashram Schools

1.17 It has been mentioned in the Background Note that the scheme is in operation since 1990-91. Twenty two States and two Union Territories are identified as Tribal Sub-Plan Areas for implementing the Scheme. However, the scheme is implemented only in 14 States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

1.18 When asked as to why the scheme was not implemented in all Tribal Sub-Plan Areas and what are the reasons for this slow progress, the Ministry informed that :-

"The scheme is need based and demand driven. Ashram Schools are sanctioned based on the demand of the State/UT Administrations. The Scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas is a gap filling initiative over and above the support extended by the line Ministry of Human Resource and Development and under the Tribal Sub Plan of the concerned State. The recurring cost of Ashram Schools is to be borne by the State Governments".

1.19 The Committee wanted to know about the number of proposals received by the Ministry for setting up of Ashram Schools across the States and Union Territories during

the last three years and the number of proposals approved/ pending as on date, state-wise, the Ministry stated that :-

"The receipt of proposals from State/UT Administrations in Tribal Sub Plan Areas is a continuous and ongoing process. Central Assistance is released to the States/UTs based on the proposals, complete in all respects, received from them and subject to availability of funds in a particular financial year".

1.20 The State-wise releases of funds and number of Ashram Schools sanctioned during the last three years under the scheme of 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas are given in Table 1.20.

(Rs. in lakh)

Table 1.20 : State-wise release of funds for Ashram Schools

SL. NO.	NAME OF STATE/UT	2010-11			2011-12			2012-13		
		Amt.	School	Seat	Amt.	School	Seat	Amt.	School	Seat
1	Andhra Pradesh	500	13	1300	-	-	-	988.49	27	2700
2	Chhattisgarh	-	-	-	-	-	-	530.36	12	600
3	Goa	-	-	-	-	-	-	300.00	1	500
4	Gujarat	1887.5	8	2400	1500	Arrears	-	-	-	-
5	Kerala	1025	3	770	-	-	-	1025.02	Arrear	-
6	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	-	2815.11	40	2000	-	-	-
7	Orissa	2004	Arrear	-	2550	30	7500	2458.90	Arrear	-
8	Rajasthan	-	-	-	634.89	9	900	-	-	-
9	Tripura	622.76	16	1150	-	-	-	797.23	Arrear	-
10	Uttrakhand	460.69	2	405	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	6500.00	42	6025	7500.00	79	10400	6100.00	40	3800

1.21 On the issue of education to the tribal population, the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs deposited before the Committee as under:-

"The basic responsibility of providing education to the entire populace rests with the Ministry of HRD in the Central Government and the State Governments. In the Ministry of Tribal Affairs we will be stepping in wherever we feel there is an extra gap without filling which children's access to education will be seriously compromised. It is in that perspective we have launched various schemes that we at present implement including the Ashram schools and we are not in any doubt that these 862 schools that we have financed will in a significant way mitigate the problems."

1.22 About the time limit of completion of construction of Ashram Schools and the reasons for non-completion of construction work on time, the Ministry informed that the scheme stipulates that the construction work should be completed within two years of sanction. However, States have not been able to complete the construction within two years due to the following reasons, as cited by the States:-

- (i) Difficulty in finding contractor for difficult, far flung, areas.
- (ii) Shifting of location mainly in LWE affected districts

Funding Pattern of the Scheme

1.23 Under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram School in Tribal Sub Plan Area, State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls' Ashram Schools and also for construction of Boys' Ashram Schools in naxal affected areas. The funding pattern for the other Boys' Ashram Schools to State Governments is on 50:50 basis, while cent percent assistance is given to UTs for construction both Girls' and Boys' Ashram Schools.

1.24 The Committee enquired as to why 100% funding was not extended to all boys' Ashram Schools, the Ministry in their written replies submitted that the limited financial

resources/budget outlay of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs do not allow extension of 100% funding for Ashram Schools except critical areas such as Naxalite affected areas and girls. Since tribal girls are more vulnerable and disadvantaged than boys there is greater focus on them under the scheme. Hence, it may not be feasible to amend the existing scheme guidelines for permitting 100% funding for boys' Ashram Schools.

1.25 The Ministry have furnished a statement (Refer table 1.25) showing State-wise break up relating to respective contribution of Union Government and concerned State Government for the construction of Ashram School during the last five years.

(Rs. in lakh)

Table 1.25 : State-wise break up funds (Central share and State share) for the last five years

Sl. No.	Name of the State	2008-09			2009-10			2010-11			2011-12			2012-13		
		State Share	Central Share	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned	State Share	Central Share	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned	State Share	Central Share	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned	State Share	Central Share	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned	State Share	Central Share	No. of Ashram Schools sanctioned
1.	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-	407.645	1116.615	13	-	-	-	737.50	1487.50	27
2.	Chhattisgarh	-	1265	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1168.08	12
3.	Gujarat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4532.00	08	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Goa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	956.02	956.02	01
5.	Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Karnataka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Kerala	-	-	-	-	-	-	832.70	2050.04	03	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	-	1350	2490	52	-	-	-	950	2850	40	-	-	-

9.	Maharashtra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Orissa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5100	30	-	-	-	-
11.	Rajasthan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1703	09	-	-	-	-
												.07					
12.	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	205.66	1419	16	-	-	-	-
											5	.99					
13.	Uttarakhand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	921.3	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
									8								
14.	Uttar Pradesh	-	-	-	156.	468	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
					30	.90											

Note: The State and Central share is worked out at the time of sanctioning the project. The Central share is released on installment basis subject physical and financial progress report. Unspent balance if any is also adjusted. Sometime the last installment of the previous sanctioned are released simultaneously with 1st installment of the fresh project.

1.26 It is seen from Table 1.25 that no funds were given to the States of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Maharashtra for construction of Ashram Schools during the last five years. Queries about the reasons for non release of funds to these States, the Ministry in their written reply informed that no proposals complete in all respect were received from these States and as such, no funds had been released during the last five years.

1.27 The Committee also observed that some of the State Governments are not able to send viable and complete proposals for funds on time but they have sizeable tribal population. Asked about the steps being taken to encourage and persuade the State Governments to send viable and complete proposals on time so that they can get funds and whether some guidance is given to State Governments for sending complete and viable proposals, the Ministry stated :-

"(the Ministry) Periodically conducts meetings with various State Governments wherein guidance for sending complete and viable proposals under the scheme is given. The Ministry also writes to State Governments in case the proposal is incomplete and unviable, clearly indicating the shortcomings which need to be rectified. Through telephone and e-mails also, States are guided in this regard".

On a specific query on non-sanctioning of Ashram Schools to West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, the Ministry informed that no proposal has been received from the State of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu for sanctioning of Ashram Schools.

Proposed Umbrella scheme for education of Scheduled Tribes

1.28 It has been mentioned in the background note that grant-in-aid under the scheme is released only for construction of school buildings. The maintenance and running of the Ashram Schools is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration concerned.

1.29 When enquired whether difficulties in regard to maintenance and running of the Ashram Schools by the State Government/UT Administration came to the notice of the Ministry, the Ministry stated :-

"During the course of periodic review meetings held with Secretaries/Commissioners of the Tribal Welfare Departments of State Governments/UT Administrations it has come to notice that States face problems in maintaining and running of the Ashram Schools for want of sufficient funds. With a view to address this problem, among other things, the Ministry have proposed an Umbrella Scheme for the education of Scheduled Tribes children for XIIth Plan period through which more funds are proposed to be made available to the States/Union Territories for suitably upgrading the Ashram Schools and bringing about quality change in their functioning. The proposal is under process".

1.29.1 A brief on the Proposed Umbrella Scheme is enclosed at **Annexure -I**.

1.30 Asked about the Budget earmarked for the Umbrella Scheme, the Ministry submitted that under the proposed Umbrella Scheme, an estimated expenditure for Central share has been projected to the tune of Rs 5935.18 crore for the 12th plan period.

1.31 Asked about the stage of approval of the Umbrella Scheme and when it is to be finalized and implemented, the Ministry replied that :-

"The Planning Commission has supported the proposal. Detailed comments on the draft EFC Memorandum have been received from Planning Commission which are being examined for being incorporated in the EFC memorandum. The Draft EFC was circulated to concerned Ministries/Departments for their comments. Comments have been received from most of the Ministries. The EFC memorandum is being revised in light of comments of various Ministries/ Departments after which proposal for convening EFC meeting will be sent to the Department of Expenditure. The Umbrella scheme will be implemented as soon as the proposal is approved by the Government".

1.32 Elucidating further on the issue, the Secretary deposed during evidence:-

"We have tried to devise another scheme, namely, the Umbrella Scheme mainly by putting together all the interventions, or most of the interventions that we do in the field of education so that we are able to offer to the State Governments and the people which are actually administered programmes at the ground level better options of choosing which provisions to pick up. We have found that many States with a cafeteria of schemes for different levels of education, maybe secondary education; may be primary education; may be higher secondary education and every State has its own strengths but they are not the same. Every State requires separate actions which will help them meet the gaps in their particular States. So, we feel that our schemes for that purpose of filling gaps in that particular State we have to be sufficiently flexible. That is the purpose of having drafted this umbrella scheme which we are now hoping to take to the EFC very shortly."

1.32.1 The representative further assured to come back to the Committee once the scheme is approved. In his words :

"The scheme has been circulated. We are awaiting comments from various Ministries and Planning Commission and as soon as it is ready, we will be looking at the Finance Ministry approving the scheme, taking it to Cabinet for approval. The impetus of this apart from us wanting to make special effort to improve the education status of Scheduled Tribes was the implementation of RTE. Last time, the hon. Committee had also expressed its view that we cannot have a situation that the RTE is flouted in scheduled areas and the basic fundamental rights of children in those areas have to be guaranteed. So, we are looking at the lacunae that have been pointed out by the various evaluation reports and the lacunae that we understand in respect of the RTE, we have devised the scheme which we hope will be approved. We hope we will come back to you to give further details once the scheme is approved".

Budgetary allocation for the scheme

1.33 The Ministry furnished a statement showing the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas for the years 2008-09 to 2012-13 and the Budget Estimate for the year 2013-14 given in Table 1.33.

(Rs.in crore)

Table 1.33 : Budget for establishment of Ashram Schools

Year	BE	RE	Expenditure
2008-09	30.00	30.00	30.00
2009-10	41.00	41.00	41.00
2010-11	75.00	65.00	65.00
2011-12	75.00	75.00	75.00
2012-13	75.00	61.00	61.00
2013-14	75.00	-	

1.34 It is observed from Table 1.32 that Budget Estimate during 2012-13 was reduced to Rs.61.00 crore at RE stage. On being asked to state the reasons for reduction of Budget Estimates, the Ministry in their written reply submitted as follows:-

"The Ministry of Finance imposed a cut of Rs.990.00 crore in the budget of Ministry of Tribal Affairs at RE stage in the year 2012-13. Hence, the budget under the Scheme had to be reduced".

1.35 The Ministry informed that the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance for restoration of budget allocation. The Ministry also informed that sanctioning of Ashram Schools proposed by the States has been affected due to less budgetary allocation.

1.36 On the issue of enhancement of budgetary allocation under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas the Secretary, testified :

"I am very grateful to the Committee for lending special focus on education of ST children because this is an area where the Ministry have been specially focussing on. Nearly 25 per cent of our Budget is earmarked for educational schemes. But while I am saying this I am conscious that we are here only to fill critical gaps. At about Rs. 1200 crore worth of Budget provision for all educational schemes of the Ministry we are not in a position to meet the requirement of education of ST children."

Physical target and achievement

1.37 Table 1.37 provides the details of physical targets set and achievements made under the scheme during the years 2009-10 to 2012-13 and target set for 2013-14.

Table 1.37 : Target seats and actual seats for tribal students

Year	Target (No. of seats for ST students)	Achievement (No. of seats for ST students)
2010-11	3450	6025
2011-12	3450	10400
2012-13	3795	3800
2013-14	3795	

Facilities in Ashram Schools

1.38 The Ashram Schools of the State Governments/UT Administrations are mandated to provide all necessary facilities like drinking water, bedding and mattress, good quality food, Toilets, Security arrangements, Laboratory, Library, Computer room, watchman, sweeper and health check-up of ST students etc. in the Ashram Schools.

1.39 The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment made a visit to Aurangabad on 23rd October, 2013 and held discussions with Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department Government of Maharashtra regarding the facilities available for ST students in Ashram Schools. The Study Group raised the complaints of sub-standard food being provided to the students in Ashram Schools. There were also complaints that the personal care products being provided to the

students were of very inferior quality. The Principal Secretary assured the Committee that he would look into the matter and take necessary corrective measures.

1.40 During the course of evidence, when the Committee pointed out about the bad living conditions in Ashram Schools and the sub-standard food provided to the students, the Secretary responded as under:-

"We will be wanting to see that such schools run up to standards. The whole purpose of the Government of India is to ensure that education delivery is up to standard. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs will also be putting all its efforts to see that the standards laid down under the RTE, the standards that are essential for physical security of children, nutritional security of the children, for educational advancement of children are kept at the forefront. We will be making our efforts through the instruments that are available to us to see that our children are adequately enabled".

1.40.1 The Secretary admitted that the Union Government may not be able to fix all the ills that confront the Government but assured to address them in the new scheme. To quote the witness :

"I can only say that the conditions prevailing in Ashram Schools, because Ashram Schools are being run by States as conditions prevailing must be removed and States have been advised accordingly. The 862 that we have talked about are ones the Ministry have assisted for construction and the rest of the maintenance, running of the schools, the management, etc. is done by States. I am not disowning responsibility in a larger sense that we do consider ourselves part of the entire machinery responsible for the well being, and adequate development of the Scheduled Tribes children but I would only say with all humility that this Ministry will be able to do with our limited resources only as much as we are mandated to do. We will not be able to fix all the ills that confront us. The problems that have been highlighted are there; and we are trying in our limited way to address them but I hope that in our new scheme we would be able to lay down standards and ask States to adhere to these standards."

Reported death of ST students in Ashram Schools in Maharashtra

1.41 The study group also drew the attention of the Department on the reported deaths of 793 tribal students in some of the Ashram Schools in Maharashtra and enquired about the reasons for deaths and the amount paid to parents. The

representatives of the Department stated that the main reasons for deaths were snake bites, scorpion bites, fever and minor illness and has furnished a statement on enquiry conducted and action taken against employees. The Department also furnished the detailed information which is contained in Table 1.41.

Table 1.41 : Deaths of students in Government/Aided Ashram School and responsibility fixed

A.T.C. (Division)	Sr. No.	Project Officer, I.T.D.P.	No. of Student Death	No. of Primary enquiry conducted	Action Taken against employees				Amount paid and Unpaid to the Parents			
					Suspension	Action taken against Departmental enquiry	Show cause notice	Other action (Memo, caution or warning etc.)	No. of parents has been paid the amount	Amount paid	Amount has not been paid to the parents	Amount unpaid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Nashik	1	Nashik	56	56	5	0	6	2	34	570000	22	1530000
	2	Kalwan	70	70	6	0	0	0	42	1230000	28	420000
	3	Nangurbar	49	49	1	8	3	63	25	375000	24	1020000
	4	Taloda	166	166	5	7	23	8	99	1485000	67	2325000
	5	Dhule	5	5	4	6	0	0	5	375000	0	0
	6	Rajur	26	26	0	0	0	26	18	450000	8	240000
	7	Yawal	21	21	2	0	0	0	14	390000	7	405000
	Total Nashik Division		393	393	23	21	32	99	237	4875000	156	5940000
Thane	8	Jawhar	29	29	8	0	0	0	22	510000	7	405000
	9	Sholapur	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	15000	0	0
	10	Pen	16	16	1	0	0	0	1	15000	15	465000
	11	Ghodegaon	15	15	11	0	0	0	5	135000	10	510000
	12	Shahapur	21	21	0	21	0	0	6	90000	15	505000
	13	Dahanu	51	45	7	6	0	0	24	660000	27	525000
	14	Mumbai	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Thane Division		133	127	27	6	0	0	59	1425000	74	2410000
Amravati	15	Pandharkaw	33	23	2	0	0	0	12	180000	21	495000
	16	Akola	11	0	0	0	0	0	11	165000	0	0
	17	Aurangabad	4	4	2	0	0	0	3	105000	1	15000
	18	Pusad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	19	Kinwat	17	17	14	0	0	0	5	75000	12	240000
	20	Kalamnuri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	21	Dharani	71	0	0	0	0	0	37	705000	34	840000
	Total Amravati Division		136	44	18	0	0	0	68	1230000	68	1590000
Nagpur	22	Chandrapur	9	7	2	0	0	0	8	240000	1	15000
	23	Chimur	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	75000	0	0
	24	Nagpur	8	2	0	0	5	0	6	150000	2	90000
	25	Bhamragad	23	0	0	0	0	0	11	285000	12	240000
	26	Deori	31	31	3	0	2	0	14	450000	17	375000
	27	Bhandara	3	3	1	0	0	0	3	165000	0	0
	28	Aheri	15	1	0	0	0	0	14	210000	1	150000
	29	Gadchiroli	41	1	0	1	0	0	32	480000	9	4050000
	Total Thane Division		131	45	6	1	7	0	89	2055000	42	1140000
	Total of All Division		793	609	74	28	39	99	453	9585000	340	11080000

1.42 On being enquired as to why the amount was not paid to the 340 parents, the official of the State Government apprised the Study Group that a Supplementary Demand will be presented before the Winter Session of December, 2013 for settlement of the unpaid amounts.

1.43 The Committee were apprised that following efforts were being made to prevent the deaths of the students studying in Ashram Schools:

- Construction of School buildings is being done on large scale.
- Regular pest control is being done.
- Regular health checkups by the mobile health units is being done.
- First aid boxes are being provided.
- Health checkup cum sick rooms are being constructed.
- Necessary instructions have been given to the Project Officers and Head Masters.

Norms for sharing room in Ashram Schools

1.44 Through surveys by NGOs, field visits and general complaints, the Committee noted that there was general overcrowding of students in many Ashram Schools as many students were made to share single room. On the reported overcrowding of students in hostels, the Ministry informed as under :-

"The Ministry have not fixed norms for sharing rooms by the students. The Ministry sanctioned the Ashram Schools based on the project layout plan duly certified by State/Central PWD which *inter-alia* include number of seats, number of students to be accommodated in class etc. Further, there is a provision for upgrading of existing Ashram Schools to avoid overcrowding of students".

Security of students in Ashram Schools

1.45 On the issue of the security arrangement for students studying in Ashram Schools especially in the naxal affected areas, the Ministry replied that in the existing scheme, the Central Government provides financial assistance for construction cost of Ashram Schools. The running and maintenance including security arrangement for students studying in Ashram Schools especially in the Naxal affected areas of the Ashram Schools are the responsibility of the State Governments. State Governments have been asked to share the steps taken up by them in this regard.

Selection of Teachers

1.46 Selection and posting of right kind of teachers is crucial when education of disadvantaged children is considered. On the issue of guidelines for selection and posting of teachers in Ashram Schools, the Ministry in their written reply stated that the running of Ashram Schools constructed under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas is the responsibility of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations. Such responsibility on the part of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations encompasses the areas of teachers' recruitment, students' enrolment, syllabus, affiliation to the Education Board, Management of dropout rates and general functioning of the schools.

1.47 When asked what efforts were being made to issue guidelines which would cover all aspects of the Ashram Schools such as recruitment of teachers, students enrolment, drinking water, regular health check-up of students, etc., the Ministry replied that the proposed Umbrella scheme provides for Salary of additional teachers to be recruited, teachers training, Incentives to teachers for learning tribal language, training on School leadership, Access to day scholars, upgradation of existing Ashram Schools, regular Health

check up of students in coordination with NRHM etc. Besides, the Umbrella Scheme also provides for assisting the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)/ State Institute of Education (SIE) to strengthen their curricular development unit to include the relevant context.

1.48 The Committee enquired about the number of teachers vacancies in Ashram Schools, State-wise, the Ministry in their written reply informed that since the administration/running of the Ashram Schools after completion is the responsibility of concerned State /UT Administrations as per existing scheme, no such data is maintained centrally.

1.49 When the Committee desired to know about the medium of teaching in Ashram Schools and whether the children are taught in their own dialect, the Ministry replied that this aspect is decided by the State Government as the Ministry's scheme is limited to only construction of Ashram schools.

As per the information received from the Ministry of Human Resource Development the following are practices under SSA for STs

- Development of educational material in local languages using resources available within the community.
- Textbooks in mother tongue for children at the beginning of Primary education where they do not understand medium of instruction.
- Incorporation of local knowledge in the curriculum and textbooks.
- Teaching in the local language by recruiting native speakers as teachers

- Training of teachers in multilingual education. Special training for non-tribal teachers to work in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal dialect.
- Sensitization of teachers to tribal cultures and practices.
- Establishing resource centres in tribal dominated states for providing training, academic and other technical support for development of pedagogic tools and education materials catering to multi-lingual situations.
- Creating spaces for cultural mingling within schools so as to recognize tribal cultures and practices and obliterate feelings of inferiority and alienation among tribal children.
- Involvement of community members in school activities to reduce social distance between the school and the community.
- Anganwadis and Balwadis in each school in tribal areas so that the girls are not required for sibling care.
- Special plan for nomadic and migrant workers

Dropout rate of STs

1.50 As per independent sample survey conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau, New Delhi (IMRB) in 2009, the dropout rates of ST children, both in the elementary and secondary levels are quite high as compared to other category of students. While 55% of the enrolled children dropout at the elementary level, this figure stands at 71% at the secondary grades in 10 year schooling cycle. This is about 15% more compared to the dropout rates among the SC category children and 22% more than the overall school going children.

1.51 Responding to the Committee's concern about higher dropout rate of STs as compared to other category of students, the Secretary deposed before the Committee as under:-

"It is a fact that there is nearly 20 per cent gap in the enrolment and 20 per cent higher in the dropout rates. This is something that we will have to collectively address between the Ministry of HRD, the State Governments and to a small extent the Ministry of Tribal Affairs."

1.51.1 Representative further submitted :

"The data that we have given in our replies is collected by the Ministry of Human Resources Development. What has been mentioned is that the dropout rate has increased in respect of Scheduled Tribe children in higher classes. A number of reasons have been suggested. All the schools do not go upto class 10 or class 12. This is the reason why last year, we started the pre-matric scholarship scheme to ensure that children who are unable to continue because of inadequate means are enabled to the provision of such a scholarship. Also, we find that there is a problem of understanding or achievement levels in schools because the language of instruction, very often, is not the language spoken by the STs".

1.52 Asked about the measures taken to control dropout rates among tribal students, the Ministry informed that various studies on dropouts and out of School Children conducted by Ministry of Human Resource Development suggests higher dropouts among ST children as compared to other categories. The Ministry of Human Resource Development identified more than 100 Districts as Special Focus Districts (SFDs) with ST population more than 25% and taking various steps to reduce dropout among Scheduled Tribes. Besides, though small, various education related schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are also targeted towards critical gap filling to further reduce the dropout rate of ST students. Schemes like Construction of Ashram Schools, Hostels and various Scholarships are helping in improvement of retention of ST students.

Monitoring Mechanism

1.53 The Ministry monitors the Scheme by receipt of physical and financial progress reports from the State Governments. The Ministry also conducts meetings periodically with States Governments/UT Administrations and officers of the Ministry also sometimes visit the projects. All the programmes of this Ministry are to be reviewed by the District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development.

1.54 On being enquired how many field visits undertaken by the officials of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to Ashram Schools in the States/UTs during the last five years, the Ministry stated that officers from the level of Deputy Secretary and above undertake field visits as and when possible. However, due to acute shortage of staff, the visits could not be undertaken frequently.

1.55 When asked whether any effort were made by way of impressing upon the State Governments for more involvement of village Panchayats/local community/representatives of parents in monitoring the working of Ashram Schools, the Ministry replied that the running and maintaining of the Schools is the responsibility of the concerned State/UT Administrations as per the scheme guidelines.

Prof. Thorat's Report

1.56 When asked to furnish the findings of the Thorat Committee Report on educational requirements of STs, the Ministry informed that the Ministry of HRD has been requested to furnish the findings of report. It was also submitted that the Ministry of Human Resource Development subsequently reminded about the same and that a copy of 'the report on the findings will be made available as soon as the same is received from the Ministry of HRD'.

Evaluation by IIPA

1.57 An evaluation study of “Ashram Schools” in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand was conducted by the “Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)” during the year 2006-07. It was inter alia recommended that the number of Ashram school needs to be increased based on demand focusing on areas where children continue to be unenrolled, and quality of Ashram School must be ensured with required infrastructure. Other suggestions include ensuring access to institutions of higher learning including higher school and higher secondary level, proper sanitation facilities and provision of requisite support staff in the form of teacher/warden staying in school campus, etc.

1.58 Asked about the implementation status of IIPA recommendations, the Ministry in their written reply stated that the State Governments have been advised repeatedly to take necessary steps to address the issues raised in the evaluation study. The Scheme of ‘Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas’ was revised w.e.f.1.4.2008 which addresses some of the concerns.

Evaluation by NIRD

1.59 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their background note have stated that an evaluation study of the education – related schemes run by them, including the scheme of “Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas” has been entrusted to National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad for their continuation in the 12th Five Year Plan. The draft evaluation report has been received by the Ministry. The recommendations made by NIRD in their draft evaluation report are as under:

- Central Government should bear the recurring and non-recurring costs of the Ashram Schools established in Tribal Sub Plan areas for better quality education.
- Admissions to Ashram Schools should be in the ratio of 80:20 between tribal and non-tribal students for proper mix and integration.
- 10% of Ashram Schools seats should be earmarked for the local students as day scholars with day boarding and other facilities to have local community support.
- All Ashram Schools should have provision of Early Childhood Education (ECE) facility for mainstreaming the tribal children.
- Ashram Schools should be provided with annual building maintenance grant for school and hostel buildings.
- Career guidance and counseling facility to be provided.

1.60 The Committee has wanted to know whether the Ministry propose to implement all the NIRD's recommendations, the Ministry replied that they have formulated an "Umbrella Scheme", wherein some of the suggestions of NIRD have been incorporated. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) component has not been included as the XIIth Plan allocation of the Ministry is too modest to introduce this.

1.61 Reacting to the committee's query as to why IIPA & NIRD were chosen for Evaluation studies of Ashram Schools, the Secretary deposed before the Committee as under:-

"Definitely, we would have like NUEPA or some other institution who are closely aligned with education to really look at the way education is transacted. But there are constraints in the kinds of institutions who have the time and the ability to conduct evaluation programmes. Although the IIPA evaluation is done in 2006-07 in the last year when we have to evaluate the programme in the 11th Plan period, we asked the NIRD – NIRD results are also with you – we would like that some institution that is better oriented to the pedagogical requirements should be able to

take a look and maybe we would take this suggestion and see that many more evaluations of this kind are actually conducted".

PART - B

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Integrated plan of action for bringing STs at par with other groups : The Committee observe that education has been recognized as key to bringing social economic development of the country and also to level out disparities in opportunities for marginalized groups with the general population. Therefore, educational development of STs, which are the lowest in various socio-economic parameters, has been accorded priority in the National Policy of Education, 1986 and Programmes for Action Plan 1992. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan initiated to meet Constitutional commitments to ensure free and compulsory elementary education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years had a special focus on education of tribal children. The Committee, however, note with concern that despite several campaigns to promote educational development of the Scheduled Tribes since independence, the literacy rates among the STs vis-à-vis India average continue to show wide gap. Though the overall literacy gap amongst various groups and STs has come down from 19.77% to 14.03%, a scrutiny of State-wise literacy data reveals that in most of the north eastern States viz. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, STs are at par with the general population, whereas in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which have sizeable ST population in remote areas, the literacy gap is still as high as 18 to 26 percent. The Committee exhort the Government to view the large disparity in literacy rates of STs in these States which have lagged in almost all socio-economic parameters, with all seriousness and

promote educational development for STs in these States on a mission mode which alone has the potential to open flood gates for development of the STs.

2. Need for concerted and collaborative efforts by all stakeholder : The Committee note that Ministry of Human Resource Development is mandated to promote literacy among all groups including the tribals. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs which is the nodal Ministry for welfare of STs only supplements the efforts of Ministry of Human Resource Development through gap filling programmes. However, the State Governments which are responsible for running the educational institutions for STs have a major role to play in effective implementation of the schemes. The Committee are, therefore, of the considered view that only by concerted and collaborative efforts of the two Ministries, the State Governments and the NGOs, the desired results can be achieved to enhance the literacy rate among the STs. The Committee, therefore, recommend that an integrated plan of action for bringing STs at par with other groups in educational development with effective coordination mechanism of the various stake holders be prepared and put into implementation so as to achieve desired results in a definite time frame. The Committee would like the State Governments to report to Union Government on the progress achieved in this regard every six months so that these can be assessed and corrective steps can be taken.

3. Need for Ashram School data, State-wise : The Committee note that Ashram Schools in tribal areas run by State Governments across the country are playing a crucial role in imparting elementary education to tribal students. As informed by the Ministry, the concerned State Governments/UT administrations are responsible for general functioning of schools including teachers' recruitment, students' enrollment, syllabus, affiliation to education board, management of dropout rate, etc. The Committee have, however, been informed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that with the notification of RTE Act, Ashram Schools also come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms of standards. The Committee are, however, constrained to note that neither the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) nor the Ministry of Tribal Affairs have the information about the number of Ashram Schools functioning in various States. The Committee, therefore, feel that with the promulgation of RTE Act, it has become incumbent on both the Central and State Governments to collect data State-wise about the number of tribal schools and to ensure observance of prescribed norms for the Ashram Schools. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should closely watch and review the prescribed norms of standards being followed by the States for Ashram Schools, collect and maintain year-wise and State-wise data on Ashram Schools and, in case of any shortcomings, exhort the concerned States to take necessary corrective action.

4. Central scheme on 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas': The Committee observe that to supplement the efforts of State Governments, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing a scheme

'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas'. The Scheme is in operation since 1990-91 and has been revised with effect from financial year 2008-09. Twenty two States and two Union Territories have been identified as Tribal Sub Plan Areas for implementing the Scheme. However, the Committee are concerned to note that though the scheme is in operation for the last 20 years, so far only 862 Ashram Schools have been sanctioned in 14 States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttrakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Further, in some States viz. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh as many as 242, 164 and 134 schools have been sanctioned whereas in States like Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Jharkhand which have very low literacy rates among the STs as compared to the national average, only 78, 82, 9 and 2 schools have been sanctioned respectively. In West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, no schools have been sanctioned so far. The Committee are not happy with the reply of the Ministry that the scheme is need based, demand driven and Ashram Schools are sanctioned based on the demand of the States/UT Administrations. The Committee are apprehensive that there might be some underlying reasons for which these States, in spite of having very large ST population, are reluctant and not showing any interest in opening of Ashram Schools. The Committee are disturbed that even after launching of the scheme for more than two decades, it has not been implemented in all the TSP areas thereby depriving the ST students of the benefits of the scheme only because State Governments/UTs were not able to send demands for setting up of Ashram Schools. The Committee recommend that earnest efforts should be made by the Ministry to sensitize and motivate all the States/UTs to send proposals for setting up of Ashram

Schools by undertaking a special drive and chalking out a proactive action plan so that the scheme is implemented in all the States/UTs identified as Tribal-sub Plan areas. The Committee further desire that the Ministry in coordination with State Governments should identify ST areas with low literacy rate and take proactive steps to sanction Ashram Schools for these areas.

5. Proposal for Construction of Ashram Schools : The Committee regret to note that the Ministry was unable to furnish the number of proposals received by them for setting up of Ashram Schools across the States and Union Territories during the last three years and the proposals approved/pending as on date, State-wise. The Committee do not accept the plea of the Ministry that the receipt of proposals from States/UT Administrations in Tribal Sub Plan Areas is a continuous and ongoing process and Central Assistance is released to the States/UTs based on the proposals, complete in all respects, received from them and are subject to availability of funds in a particular financial year. In order to bring greater transparency and efficiency, the Committee recommend that the Ministry furnish a detailed statement on the number of proposals received, rejected, approved and those pending, with reasons therefor, State-wise during the last three years. This may be done within three months of the presentation of this Report.

6. Delay in construction of Ashram Schools : The Committee note that out of 862 Ashram Schools, 246 are yet to be constructed even after the stipulated period of two years. The reasons cited for the same were difficulty in finding contractors, vast spread of the tribal regions and shifting of location mainly in Left Wing Extremism

(LWE) affected districts. Keeping in view the fact that delay in construction works is leading to high escalation in costs, besides depriving the tribal students of the benefits, the Committee recommend that the Government in coordination with State Governments make concerted efforts to effectively address the difficulties cited above including giving more flexibility to State Governments wherever required for constructing the remaining 246 Ashram Schools and to make them functional in a time bound manner. The Committee also recommend that there should be a proper mechanism for monitoring of the construction of Ashram Schools in close co-ordination with the State Government concerned.

7. Funding pattern of Ashram School in Tribal Sub Plan Areas : The Committee observe that under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas, State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls' Ashram Schools and also for construction of Boys' Ashram Schools in naxal affected areas. The funding pattern for the other Boys' Ashram Schools to State Governments is on 50:50 basis. The Ministry apprised the Committee that the limited financial resources/budget outlay of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs do not allow extension of 100% funding for Ashram Schools except critical areas such as Naxalite affected areas and Ashram Schools for girls. It is well accepted that the tribal community in India in general is one of the most backward and vulnerable sections of the society and Ashram Schools play a pivotal role in imparting basic education to the tribal students, which is the very essence of tribal upliftment. Since most of the States are facing resource crunch and they are not coming forward with proposals, the Committee urge the Ministry to amend the existing scheme guidelines for grant

of 100% funding in all the boys Ashram Schools in non-naxal affected areas as well, waiving of the 50% share clause of the States. This should also be in respect of non-recurring items of expenditure, purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishing, purchase of few sets of books for a small library for use of inmates of the hostels etc. The Committee feel the avowed principle of inclusive growth and the compelling case of moral equity, will remain a mere shibboleth unless the Government eradicates illiteracy and malnourishment among the tribals.

8. State proposals for setting of Ashram Schools : The Committee note with concern that no funds were given to the States of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Maharashtra for construction of Ashram Schools during the last five years. The Committee also note that some of the State Governments, having sizeable tribal population, are not able to send viable and complete proposals for funds on time. The Ministry have also informed that they are unable to process many proposals since they are not complete in all respects and their viability have not been established by the States concerned. The Ministry conducts meetings periodically with various State Governments wherein guidance for sending complete and viable proposals under the scheme is given. Seriously concerned that the ST students are being deprived of the benefit of the scheme, the Committee urge the Ministry to provide proper guidance to all the States including the States mentioned above so that the benefits of Ashram Schools are availed of by the ST students of all the States. The Committee would also like the Ministry to incentivize the States so that they are encouraged to submit proposals for opening of new Ashram Schools.

9. **Umbrella scheme for education of ST children** : The Committee observe that grant-in-aid under the Scheme is released only for construction of school buildings and the maintenance and running of the Ashram Schools is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration concerned. The Committee also observe that during the course of periodic review meetings held with Secretaries/ Commissioners of the Tribal Welfare Departments of State Governments/UT Administrations it has come to notice that States face problems in maintaining and running of the Ashram Schools for want of sufficient funds. The Ministry have also informed that with a view to addressing this problem, among other things, the Ministry had proposed an Umbrella Scheme for the education of Scheduled Tribes children for 12th Plan period through which more funds are proposed to be made available to the States/Union Territories for suitably upgrading the Ashram Schools and bringing about quality change in their functioning. The Committee note that under the proposed Umbrella Scheme, Rs. 5935.18 crore has been projected as Central share for the 12th plan period. On the status of the approval of the Umbrella Scheme, the Ministry apprised the Committee that the Planning Commission has supported the proposal and the EFC memorandum was being revised in the light of comments of various Ministries/ Departments after which proposal for convening EFC meeting will be sent to the Department of Expenditure. **The Committee urge the Ministry to get the scheme approved without loss of further time so that the Umbrella Scheme can be implemented during the current fiscal itself to strengthen the States financially as well as to ensure smooth running and maintenance of Ashram Schools.**

10. Inadequate Budgetary allocation for the scheme : The Committee are dismayed to note that the budgetary allocation of Rs. 75 crore for the scheme during 2012-13 was reduced to Rs.61.00 crore at Revised Estimate stage as the Ministry of Finance imposed an overall cut of Rs.990.00 crore in the budget of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Hence, the budget under the scheme Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas had to be reduced. The Committee are deeply concerned to note that as admitted by the Ministry, this reduction has adversely affected the sanctioning of Ashram Schools proposed by the States. Expressing their strong disapproval over the reduction of the budget estimate of such an important scheme, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should vigorously pursue with the Ministry of Finance/Planning Commission for restoring the budgetary allocation for the scheme and also desisting from affecting any cuts under the scheme during R.E. stage in future so that the sanctioning of Ashram Schools proposed by the States are not adversely affected. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry seek higher budgetary allocations for the scheme in accordance with the proposals received from the States so to accelerate the literacy level of the tribals.

11. Number of ST children benefited : The Committee observe that during 2010-11 and 2011-12 against the target of 3450 students benefited under the scheme, the achievements were 6025 and 10400 students respectively. During the year 2012-13, against the target of 3795 students, achievement was 3800 students. Taking note of the huge mismatch between the targets and achievements under the scheme, when achievements have constantly overshoot the targets for the last three years, the

Committee conclude that the targets have been fixed without undertaking due exercise of assessing the number of seats likely to be created in States. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Ministry to fix targets which are higher but realistic after ascertaining the progress in each State and strive to achieve the same within the stipulated period.

12. Need for supplying quality food : During their Study visits, it was brought to the notice of the Committee that sub-standard food was being provided to the students in some of the Ashram Schools and that personal care products of inferior quality were being provided to the students. Though, the Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department, Maharashtra assured the Committee that he would look into the matter, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should impress upon all the State Governments to take such complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries in this regard. Also, keeping in view the sub-standard food and bad quality of personal care products being provided to the students in Ashram Schools, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should ensure strict compliance of the standards laid down under the Right to Education Act.

13. Death of ST children in Ashram Schools : The Committee were shocked to note during the Study Visit that 793 children died in Ashram Schools in Maharashtra from the year 2001-2002 to 2012-2013 due to snake bites, scorpion bites, fever and minor illness. The Committee were apprised that the State Government conducted a total of 609 primary enquiries and as a result thereof,

74 employees were suspended, departmental enquiry initiated against 28 employees, show cause notice were issued to 39 employees and 99 were given Memorandum, warning, etc. The Committee also note that 453 parents were given ex-gratia payment while 340 parents are yet to be disbursed the ex-gratia amount. The Committee are not satisfied with the action as it is a clear case of criminal neglect on the part of the schools' authorities in not ensuring timely treatment for the tribal children which could have saved their precious lives. The Committee, therefore, recommend that (a) the Ministry call for a detailed report from all the States concerned in this regard and that necessary corrective and punitive measures are taken; (b) all possible steps, including periodical health check-up of students and making adequate arrangements for first-aid facilities in each Ashram Schools, should be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents; (c) the teachers and staff residing in the school campus should be trained to administer first aid for snake/scorpion bites in areas infested with them so as to prevent deaths on this count; and (d) ex-gratia payment may be disbursed to the remaining families expeditiously.

14. Overcrowding in hostels : The Committee are deeply dismayed and concerned over overcrowding in Ashram schools and hostels. The Committee are saddened to note that the Ministry have not fixed norms for sharing of rooms by the students. The Ministry have maintained that they sanction the Ashram Schools based on the project layout plan duly certified by State/Central PWD which *inter-alia* include number of seats, number of students to be accommodated in class, etc. Keeping in view the dangerous overcrowding of tribals students in schools and

hostels, the Committee urge the Ministry to fix the norms for sharing of rooms by the students in Ashram Schools in consonance with RTE regulation and come out with a student friendly policy. The Committee further recommend that at Ashram schools where students enrollment exceeds the seats availability, urgent steps be taken to open more schools in the area.

15. Security in Ashram Schools : The Committee note that the running and maintenance including security arrangement for students studying in Ashram Schools, especially in the Naxal affected areas of the Ashram Schools, is the responsibility of the State Governments. In the considered view of the Committee, a teacher/warden must stay in the school campus for ensuring efficient running of the schools and the safety of the children. The Committee also recommend that the officials working as Hostel Superintendents should be imparted special training and properly sensitized so that they can deal with various exigencies, including security related issues, in running of the Ashram Schools and can contact the civil and police authorities at the time of need. The police officials should pay special attention to these schools including periodic patrolling of school premises and surrounding areas.

16. Appointment of teachers in Ashram Schools : The Committee observe that teachers' recruitment, students' enrolment, syllabus, affiliation to the Education Board, student attendance and general functioning of the schools fall under the domain of State Governments/UT Administration. On the issuance of guidelines for selection of teachers, the Ministry stated that the proposed Umbrella scheme

provides for salary of additional teachers to be recruited, teachers training, incentive to teachers for learning tribal language, training in School leadership, access to day scholars, upgradation of existing Ashram Schools, regular health check up of students in coordination with National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), etc. Besides, the Umbrella Scheme also provides for assistance to the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)/ State Institute of Education (SIE) to strengthen their curricular development unit to make them more relevant to the changing world. The Committee further observe that in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for education of STs, emphasis has been given to development of education material and teaching in local languages. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the tribal teachers especially from the same community be appointed in Ashram Schools and ST youths be encouraged to take up teaching in Ashram Schools. The Committee also recommend that special training should be imparted to non-tribal teachers for working in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal language and the teachers must be sensitized to the cultural and behavioral pattern of tribal children and motivated to render efficient service to Ashram Schools. The Committee also desire that suitable atmosphere should be created in Ashram Schools for enhancing the self esteem and confidence of the tribal students, making them feel comfortable in the schools setting.

17. Dropouts from Ashram Schools : The Committee observe that as per independent sample survey conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) International, New Delhi in 2009, the dropout rates of ST children, both in the elementary and secondary levels are quite high as compared to other categories of

students. The Committee have also been informed that while 55% of the enrolled children dropout at the elementary level, this figure stands at 71% at the secondary grades in 10 year schooling cycle. This is about 15% more compared to the dropout rates among the SC category children and 22% more than the overall school going children. Responding to the anxiety of the Committee, the Ministry have informed that the Ministry of Human Resource Development have identified more than 100 Districts as Special Focus Districts (SFDs) with ST population of more than 25%, taking various steps to reduce dropout rate among Scheduled Tribes. Besides, though small, various education related schemes of the Ministry are also targeted towards filling of critical gap to further reduce the dropout rate of ST students. In addition to this, schemes like Construction of Ashram Schools, Hostels and various Scholarships are helping in improvement of retention of ST students. The Committee, while appreciating the above initiatives, are of the considered view that the major reason for higher dropout rate in Ashram Schools is that in most of the States the medium of instruction is English, Hindi or regional language and most of tribal children do not understand the textbooks. The Committee are of the considered view that there is an urgent need to develop textbooks in the mother tongue for the children at the beginning when they do not understand the regional languages. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ST children should be taught in their own language at the beginning of the primary education cycle with provision to switchover to regional languages and English/Hindi in due course. The Committee hope that these steps would certainly help in reducing the dropout rate amongst the tribal students.

18. Monitoring of Ashram Schools : The Committee were apprised that the Ashram School scheme is being monitored by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs by calling for physical and financial progress reports from the State Governments and also through periodic meetings with State/UT Governments officials. However, the Committee are dismayed to note that due to acute shortage of staff, the visits could not be undertaken at frequent intervals. The Committee are at a loss to comprehend as to how in the absence of any field visits by the officials of the Ministry, the projects and the schemes are being monitored. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should approach the Ministry of Finance/DOPT for creation of adequate posts so that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is able to discharge the assigned mandate efficiently. The Committee further desire that the State Governments should be exhorted to involve village Panchayats/local community/representatives of parents in monitoring the working of Ashram Schools.

19. HRD Report on STs : The Committee observe that a Sub-Committee of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Thorat on educational requirements of STs. The Committee are dismayed to note that the findings of the above Report are yet to be obtained from the Ministry of HRD. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make available the findings of the Thorat Committee Report and implement its recommendations/suggestions for the better functioning of the Ashram Schools.

20. Evaluation of Ashram Schools : The Committee were apprised that an evaluation study of the education – related schemes of the Ministry, including the scheme of “Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas” has been entrusted to National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad for their continuation in the 12th Five Year Plan and the draft evaluation report has been received by the Ministry. On the status of implementation of NIRD Report the Ministry replied that taking into account the study Report of NIRD and the recommendations even after detailed discussions of a Core Group formed in October, 2012 to delve into the issue of education for the Scheduled Tribe students, they have formulated an “Umbrella Scheme”, wherein some of the suggestions of NIRD have been incorporated. The Committee would like to know the implementation status of NIRD Report in the context of the new Umbrella Scheme.

21. Counseling on the career options to STs : The Committee are of the considered opinion that outside agencies should be engaged for specialized counseling on the career options and the students should also be taken out on study visits to institutes of education like IIT, and IIMs, etc. for an enriching exposure to the academic/professional atmosphere so that they get motivated to set their respective goals and seriously endeavor to achieve them. The Committee also recommend introduction of vocational education in the Ashram Schools with a view to providing more professional and career oriented options to the students. Taking note of the innate bravery and sense of fearlessness of the tribal children, the Committee recommend that physical exercise and physical training should be

imparted regularly in the Ashram Schools so that they can be groomed to join the Defence Forces and also make their distinct mark in the field of sports.

NEW DELHI:

13 February, 2014
24 Magha, 1935 (Saka)

HEMANAND BISWAL

**Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and Empowerment**

**A Brief on proposed Umbrella Scheme for Education
of ST Children**

Background & current situation on the education of STs

The Constitution of India provides for a comprehensive framework for the socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes and for preventing their exploitation by other social groups. Article 15(4) underscores the nation's basic commitment to positive discrimination in favour of the Scheduled Tribes. Article 46 expresses the clear intent to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Various education indicators suggest that a lot of improvement has been made by Tribal. The literacy rate of ST has increased substantially over the years i.e. 8.53% in 1961 to 47.10% in 2001. Despite this achievement, the average performance of such students at all levels continues to be low. States record poor educational and basic literacy attainment of tribal children which is far behind the National average.

The 2009-10 estimates show that more than 47% of ST population was below the poverty line in rural areas and 30.4 % in urban areas. The literacy rate as per Census 2001 was 64.84% for the total population in India, but literacy rate for STs was only 47.10%. ST female literacy, however, still continued to be lower by approximately 21 percentage points as compared to the overall female literacy rate of the general population.

As per the independent sample survey conducted by IMRB in 2009 the out of school ST children in the country is estimated at 10.69 lakh (13.1% to total out of school children). Dropout rates for tribal children are higher than other categories, with about 55% of the children enrolled dropping out in the elementary grades. This scenario worsens at the secondary grades (Classes IX and X). About 71% tribal children dropped out in the 10 year schooling cycle. This is about 15% more than that seen among children belonging to the SC category and about 22% more than that seen overall. Dropout rates for tribal children also seem to stagnate in the 70% band and seem to be falling more slowly they have for other categories, which is an area of concern (Source: SES).

The 12th Plan document of the Ministry of Human Resource Development indicates that tribal communities suffer from poor economic development, physical isolation and deprivation, and are at the lowest rung in terms of poverty indicators in comparison to even other disadvantaged groups.

As per the SES 2010-11, the percentage of ST students joining Grade I and then leaving school by Grade V is as high as 35.60. Previous plans have addressed educational deprivation through creating better provisions, relaxing norms for opening primary schools in tribal hamlets, establishing residential facilities, opening Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in tribal areas, experimenting with mother tongue based Multi-lingual Education programmes in few schools (in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh) under innovation schemes in SSA etc. Despite this, problems of low achievement and high dropout rates particularly among the nomadic and primitive tribes and the tribal girls persist.

Actualizing the goal of substantial improvement in the quality of school education so that tribal children achieve higher levels of academic success and build capabilities for economic success calls for a comprehensive approach. Improvements in educational infrastructure and in quality of schooling need to be integrated with tribal children's cultural resources and identity.

The focus for the 12th plan period for tribal children must therefore not only ensure their enrolment in the classroom with improved physical facilities but also their retention and participation in an active learning mode with a positive sense of identity and empowerment.

Educational attainment of students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes shows how exclusion of the languages of the Scheduled Tribes from their school education is related to their 'voicelessness' and capability deprivation. Incapability and 'unfreedom' due to educational failure and illiteracy constitute integral aspects of the complex and multidimensional processes of capability deprivation and poverty. In fact, the non-accommodation and exclusion of language(s) in education contributes to these processes by limiting access to resources and denying equality of opportunity.

The scholarship scheme encompass scholarships to ST Children from the secondary level upwards and will continue till such time as the student chooses to continue his/her education, subject to the prescribed eligibility condition and rates of scholarship.

At the graduate and post graduate stage of education meritorious ST students, who gain admission into 213 Top Class institutes identified from time to time by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, will be entitled to fee reimbursement in addition to the scholarship.

Rationale

Notwithstanding the significant gains in access and participation of tribal children in education, there still remain a number of areas of concern such as high dropout rates at Secondary level, underage and overage enrolment at the elementary level which makes ST students vulnerable to dropout, low literacy among ST girls, large number of out of school ST children, barriers of language and social exclusion. Low learning outcomes, attendance

and retention of tribal children remain issues of major concern from the very early years to the upper primary and secondary level.

The above analysis clearly shows that low learning outcomes, attendance and retention of tribal children remain issues of major concern from the very early years to the upper primary and secondary level. Even when overall gender disparities are slowly decreasing, the educational status of ST children as compared to children of other social groups continues to remain precarious. There is a pressing need to address exclusionary practices which prevent real integration of ST children into the schooling system. There is also a need to address language issues in teaching and learning; this would enable tribal children to participate more fully in the education system.

In order to bridge these gaps and in keeping with its mandate of critical gap filling in the present schemes implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy and State Governments under Tribal Sub Plans, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing the following education related schemes for supporting creation of infrastructure, vocational training and providing scholarships/fellowships which have made some impact are proposed to be subsumed into one Umbrella Scheme for Education of ST Children:

- (a) Ashram Schools in TSP areas
- (b) Construction of hostels
- (c) Vocational training in tribal areas
- (d) Strengthening education among ST girls in low literary districts
- (e) Grant-in-aid to voluntary organization working for the welfare of ST
- (f) Pre-matric scholarship to ST children
- (g) Post-matric scholarship to ST children

The following four schemes will continue to function separately as Central Sector Plan Schemes and the same are not being subsumed in the Umbrella Scheme:

- i. Scheme for Grant-in-Aid to voluntary organisation working for the welfare of STs
- ii. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship
- iii. Eklaya Model Residential School (EMRS) Scheme
- iv. National Overseas Scholarship

In order to plan holistically for education of tribal children, optimise use of Ministry's limited resources and increase convergence with MHRD and between State Departments of education and tribal welfare in TSP areas and to align and reorient the existing schemes of this Ministry with RTE, SSA, RMSA, NCF etc. it is proposed to subsume the existing schemes under an Umbrella Scheme with two components – component one - Access component to provide critical gap filling in the area of infrastructure/activities for providing

access to education and – component two – the Scholarship Component – to enable ST children from pre-matric stage to up to the highest level of education, through appropriate and adequate financial support. The merger and reorientation of the existing schemes is expected to expand the scope, and flexibility of interventions that are presently available under these individual stand-alone schemes formulated at different points of time to fill the critical gaps in tribal education. This will facilitate the States to choose what they really need from the items available under the Umbrella Scheme. The proposed Umbrella scheme would immensely benefit the ST children in Ashram schools in improving their learning levels and better living conditions.

In the Umbrella Scheme, an Institutionalized and time-bound systems for Plan formulation, appraisal and approval is envisaged. This discipline, and the consequent timely sanction and release of funds, will provide the optimum advantage of subsuming multiple schemes under two umbrellas. Management (including technical support for planning and appraisal), monitoring, supervision at implementation level, impact and process evaluation, and research activities will be supported through funds earmarked for these purposes in the scheme design.

Overall objectives of the Scheme:

- To reduce the gap in the education achievement of ST children compared to the other population groups.
- To fill in the critical gaps in existing efforts of access, retention and quality of education of ST children.
- To ensure all Ashram Schools become RTE compliant in terms of provision of infrastructure, deployment and training of teachers, ensuring quality and equity guidelines set out by the RTE Act, 2009.
- To cater to the diverse needs of States/UTs by offering a cafeteria approach to them.
- To bring flexibility in inter-component funds flow.
- To optimize use of funds available for education in the Ministry.
- To rationalize the scheme to streamline management, monitoring and supervision.
- To ensure that MoTA funds are utilized for critical gap filling and not as a substitution of State/line ministry provisions by first tapping funds available through SSA, RMSA etc.
- To institutionalize systems of financial control and discipline.

Scope

The Ashram schools functioning with support from MoTA are proving to be cost-effective residential schools for ST children. On the other hand, there are more expensive residential schools like Navodaya Vidhyalayas, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalayas (KGBV), Model Schools, Girls Hostel, Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) etc. The Strengthening and functioning of the existing Ashram schools need revamping to provide better environment and quality learning to ST children. The Ashram schools are opened in difficult and remote areas and living conditions of the inmates needs some improvement compared to the similarly placed residential schools. The Umbrella scheme would focus on strengthening and revamping of the Ashram schools opened with the support of MoTA to some extent.

Umbrella scheme will allow MoTA to revisit the balance of investment between elementary, secondary and higher education. At present, the emphasis on secondary and higher education appears to be rather high whereas current data suggest that large numbers of tribal children drop out before they reach the secondary stage. In order to ensure that tribal children not only get enrolled in but are also retained through elementary school, MoTA interventions need to give States/UTs the space to adopt context-specific strategies for greater access, equity and quality at the elementary stage of education. For example, significant interventions are required for strengthening Ashram schools at primary and upper primary levels to ensure that the transition of tribal children to secondary and post-secondary stage is facilitated.

Components of Umbrella scheme:

The Umbrella Scheme has two components of Umbrella-I for Access to education and Umbrella-II for Scholarships.

Component-I: Access to Education component of the scheme broadly encompasses the following sub-components:

- Establishment and Strengthening of Ashram Schools
- Access to day scholar
- Upgradation of Ashram Schools and Hostels
- Facilities to children in Ashram
- Quality interventions in Ashram Schools
- Counselling support in Ashram Schools
- Vocational Education
- Establishment and strengthening of Hostels

Component-II: Scholarship component of the scheme covers the following scholarship schemes of the Ministry:

- Pre-matric Scholarship
- Post-matric Scholarship
- Top Class Education Scholarship

Details of Component-I:

With a view to supplementing other Ministry's/Department's interventions and to effect critical gap filling for ST children in TSP areas, the following programmatic interventions for Ashram Schools and Hostels in the TSP areas are proposed. These interventions need not be viewed as prescriptive, rigid and uniform components that all States, irrespective of their state of development, are obliged to follow, but as a *cafeteria* of options for States to draw upon according to their specific requirements and priorities.

Details of the Umbrella Scheme in context to the Ashram Schools are as follows:

1. Ashram Schools

Currently, Ashram schools are run by several administrative units (Education Department/Department of Social Welfare/Ministry of Tribal Affairs/Zila Parishads/ Forest Departments/ITDA among others. There is an urgent need to review the functioning and impact of these institutions and facilitate changes so that these schools are not parallel and inadequate (as they are currently) but are comparable in funding, functioning, administration, and impact as that of the Centrally funded schools.

The objective of the scheme of Ashram Schools is to increase education among Scheduled Tribes, especially PTGs, in Tribal Sub-Plan areas. Ashram Schools provide education with residential facilities for the primary, middle, secondary and senior secondary stages of education, in an environment conducive to learning. The scheme provides for 100% funding for establishment or upgradation of Ashram Schools for girls in TSP areas, i.e. school buildings, hostels, kitchen and staff quarters. It also provides 100% funding for establishment of Ashram Schools for boys in the TSP areas of LWE affected districts, identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs. 100% funding is also provided to UTs. All other Ashram schools for boys in TSP States are funded on 50:50 Centre-State sharing. Financial assistance on 50:50 basis is also given for non-recurring items of expenditure i.e. purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishing, purchase of books for a small library for use of students etc.

Studies and reports indicate that many tribal parents seek admission of their children to the residential Ashram schools. It has a dual advantage of coping with poverty by addressing needs of food and clothing along with learning.

- (a) Ashram schools are considered as cost-effective model residential schools having potential to function as Centre of Excellence in remote tribal areas. It has served a very valuable purpose in filling the critical education gap in TSP areas. In addition to addressing problems related to poverty, remoteness, civil strife/insurgency, it has served to achieve all round development of students and delivered quality education and is a time tested strategy.
- (b) Broadly, the Umbrella-I would focus on strengthening 600 Ashram Schools opened in ITDP areas. Besides, 262 more Ashram schools are approved which would be operationalized during the 12th Plan bringing the total to 862 Ashram Schools. Additionally, 138 Ashram schools would be sanctioned during the 12th Plan period depending upon the requirement of such Ashram schools in focus areas. These 138 Ashram schools are likely to become functional only during the 13th Plan period.
- (c) Presently, Central Government is providing support for infrastructure in a varying ratio without providing any recurring cost to run these Ashram schools. The recurring costs are borne by the State Government. This has resulted in poor management of Ashram schools as reported in various reports of Institute of Public Auditors of India (IPAI), National Institute of Research and Development (NIRD) and reports of Parliamentary Committee on the poor functioning and lack of basic infrastructure and maintenance of Ashram Schools. Most of the Ashram schools have acute shortage of teachers, staff and various basic facilities which are essential for a residential school.
- (d) In order to strengthen the infrastructure and other basic facilities (recurring and non-recurring) in Ashram schools, the Umbrella scheme envisages to provide for construction cost of new as well as upgradation of existing Ashram Schools, repair and maintenance, provision of principal, teachers, staff, residential facilities for teachers, principal and staff, access to day students, quality related items like teaching learning material, training of teachers in tribal language, incentive to teachers to learn tribal language, curriculum development for multi-lingual education, laboratory, library, textbooks, notebooks and stationery, school bag, uniform and games and sports equipment.
- (e) The salary of Principal, teachers and other staff already sanctioned for Ashram schools by States will continue to be borne by the States and the same will not be funded under the Umbrella Scheme. The Umbrella Scheme will provide only

additional teachers on account of increase in enrolment and also in the case of upgradation of Ashram Schools.

- (f) The provision of textbooks, uniforms, teaching learning material library, etc. being provided under SSA to elementary schools, and laboratory being provided under RMSA are not included in the Umbrella scheme and the same will continue to be provided through convergence with these schemes.
- (g) Besides, the recurring costs @ Rs. 22,000/- per annum per child for running the Ashram schools are also included in the Umbrella scheme. This recurring cost will cover fooding, lodging, toiletries, cooking fuel, cook, bedding and other daily needs of the children. At present this is provided by the State. Compared to similarly placed residential schools of NVS/KGBV/EMRS/Girls Hostel/Model School etc., the living conditions in Ashram schools are sub-standard and inadequate.
- (h) The proposed provisions will facilitate the Ashram schools to become RTE compliant in terms of provision of infrastructure, deployment and training of teachers, ensuring quality and equity guidelines set out by the RTE Act, 2009.

Proposed cost estimates for three years (2014-15 to 2016-17)

Coverage under present Educational Schemes	Outlay for 2013-14 (Rs. in crore)	Coverage under the proposed Umbrella Scheme	Outlay from 2014-15 to 2016-17 - 3 years (Rs. in crore)
<p>a) Ashram Schools Central Government provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital cost as per the norms • No maintenance cost for the buildings • No recurring cost for running Ashram Schools such as salary of the teacher and other staff etc. • No teaching learning material etc. 	75.00	<p>a) Ashram Schools Central Government will provide 80% of the cost of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new Ashram Schools • Upgradation of existing Ashram Schools • Access to Ashram Schools for day students • Teaching Learning Material (TLM) grant for teachers • School uniforms, school bags, notebooks, stationery, etc to the students • Games and sports equipment • Teachers and other staff 	<p>Non-recurring: 499.84</p> <p>Recurring: 1077.55</p> <p>Total: 1577.99</p>

2. Improving Quality

- (a) Over the decades India has achieved major gains on tribal children’s participation in education, particularly in terms of access and enrolment. These achievements can be attributed to the increased availability of schools and teachers, and the various equity and quality related interventions through broad-based schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and sporadic efforts from Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- (b) A large number of children deprived of education belong to disadvantaged communities - SC/ST/Minority groups. The RTE Act has special significance for bringing such marginalized and vulnerable children into mainstream schools for equitable and good quality education.
- (c) MoTA interventions need to give States/UTs the space to adopt context-specific strategies for greater access, equity and quality. Significant interventions are

required for strengthening Ashram schools to ensure that the transition of tribal children to secondary and post-secondary stage is facilitated. These interventions may be availed by States/UTs from a range of options provided in the Umbrella scheme.

- (d) To improve the quality of education in Ashram schools, the Umbrella scheme provides the following quality related interventions:
- i. Teacher training in tribal language
 - ii. Incentive to teachers to learning and teach in tribal language
 - iii. School leadership development
 - iv. Innovation funds for quality initiatives
 - v. Support for quality enhancement in Tribal schools
 - vi. Curriculum development through SCERTs/SIEs for Multi-lingual education
 - vii. Support for Tribal Education Unit in SCERTs/SIEs

Coverage under present Educational Schemes	Outlay for 2013-14 (Rs. in crore)	Coverage under the proposed Umbrella Scheme	Outlay from 2014-15 to 2016-17 - 3 years (Rs. in crore)
c) Quality interventions • No Central Assistance is provided.	NIL	c) Quality interventions • Curriculum development for Multi-lingual Education • Teaching in Tribal Languages • School leadership development • Innovation Fund • Support for Tribal Education Resource Unit in SCERTs/SIEs	36.34

3. Counseling

An Education Career and Vocational (ECV) Counsellor be appointed to work with ST students at the secondary and higher secondary stage in Ashram Schools and other schools run by State Tribal Welfare/development Departments pre-matric and post-matric hostels located in the TSP areas. The ECV Counsellor will refer individuals to career related training programmes, provide support in enabling students develop job search skills, locate jobs and help with job applications. One Counsellor will be engaged in each Ashram school for this purpose.

Coverage under present Educational Schemes	Outlay for 2013-14 (Rs. in crore)	Coverage under the proposed Umbrella Scheme	Outlay from 2014-15 to 2016-17 - 3 years (Rs. in crore)
e) Counselling for secondary and Higher Secondary Level • Not Available	NIL	e) Counselling for Secondary and Higher Secondary Level	10.90

4. Vocational education

- (a) 93% of the Indian workforce is concentrated in informal employment in the unorganized sector with low levels of literacy and numeracy and no mechanism available for them to enter the formal education system. Nearly 130 lakh new entrants join the workforce every year. As against this need, the existing skill development capacity in the country is enough to cater to a mere 30 lakh. It is therefore desirable to focus on the educational component to build a sound technical and vocational training system. The need is to simultaneously build a general education element into vocational education and vice versa. This will ensure a holistic approach to human resource development. The NPE, 1986 states: “The introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programme of vocational education is crucial in the proposed educational re-organisation... Vocational education will be a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified vocations spanning several areas of activity.”
- (b) The National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) has been introduced to formally integrate vocational education together with general educational streams across school and higher education spaces. Implementation of this scheme in TSP areas would ensure uniformity in qualifications across institutions, clear recognized pathways of learning, credibility among stakeholders, horizontal and vertical mobility, recognition of informal (prior) learning among ST students.
- (c) Under the Umbrella scheme provision for Work education in upper primary classes and Vocational education at Secondary and Sr. Secondary classes will be made. This will cover all Ashram schools in the country. The Schools will be provided with part-time instructors, vocational trainers and materials and equipment necessary to impart vocational training to children.

Coverage under present Educational Schemes	Outlay for 2013-14 (Rs. in crore)	Coverage under the proposed Umbrella Scheme	Outlay from 2014-15 to 2016-17 - 3 years (Rs. in crore)
<p>f) Vocational Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Training Centres run by the State Governments, NGOs and other organizations are separately funded by Central Government under the Central Sector Scheme "Vocational Training Centres". Government provides 100% funding as per norms. 	6.00	<p>f) Vocational Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Education is proposed to be integrated with the general education by removing the existing barriers within the NVEQF framework for Vocational education imparted in the country's educational institutions at every level from secondary to post-doctoral stages and the Umbrella Scheme will provide supplemental support to ST students for Work Education and Vocational Education. 	18.75

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2012-13) HELD ON MONDAY, 20th MAY, 2013

The Committee met from 1100 hrs. to 1240 hrs. in Committee Room No. 53, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

10. Shri M. Anandan
11. Smt. Susmita Bauri
12. Smt. Rama Devi
13. Kumari Meenakshi Natarajan
14. Dr. Naramalli Sivaprasad
15. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya

RAJYA SABHA

16. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
17. Shri Avtar Singh Karimpuri
18. Prof. Mrinal Miri
19. Shri Jesudasu Seelam
20. Shri Mohammad Shafi

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Devender Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Anita Jain - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Sl. No.	Name	Designation and Organization
1.	Smt. Vibha Puri Das	Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
2.	Shri A.K. Angurana	Additional Secretary & Managing Director, TRIFED
3.	Shri Ashok	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
4.	Dr. (Smt). Sadhana Rout	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
5.	Smt. Sarita Mittal	Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
6.	Shri R.S. Meena	Executive Director, TRIFED

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members of the Committee and also the representatives of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to the sitting of the Committee. The Chairman informed that the meeting had been convened to brief the Committee on the subjects namely "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" and "Displacement of Tribal People due to Developmental Projects and their rehabilitation". With the approval of the Chairman, the representative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs made a power point presentation on "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas".

3. The Members then raised points/questions, which *inter-alia* related to :-

- (i) Providing 100 % funding for boys Ashram Schools in non-naxal areas.

- (ii) Implementation of recommendations made by Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD).
- (iii) Dropout percentage in Ashram Schools.
- (iv) Need to improve Security Arrangements in Ashram Schools.
- (v) Strengthening of monitoring mechanism
- (vi) Enhancement of self-confidence of the tribal boys & girls

4. The representatives of the Ministry then responded to the queries raised by the Members to the extent possible. The Chairman directed them to furnish replies to those points which could not be replied in the meeting latest by 27th May, 2013.

5. In regard to the second subject i.e. "Displacement of Tribal People due to Developmental Projects and their rehabilitation", the Chairman observed that the same may be discussed at some other meeting when the representatives of other Ministries/Departments concerned with the subject are present.

6. The Chairman thanked the Secretary and other officials of the Ministry for giving valuable information to the Committee on the subject and expressing their views in a free and frank manner on various issues.

7. The verbatim proceedings were kept on record.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2013-14) HELD ON TUESDAY, 8th OCTOBER, 2013

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1620 hrs. in Committee Room 'E', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri M. Anandan
3. Smt. Susmita Bauri
4. Shri Tarachand Bhagora
5. Shri Gorakh Prasad Jaiswal
6. Shri Wakchaure Bhausahab R.
7. Shri Pradeep Kumar Singh

RAJYA SABHA

8. Shri K.R. Arjunan
9. Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi
10. Prof. Mrinal Miri
11. Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Roy
12. Shri Shankarbhai N. Vegad

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Devender Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Anita Jain - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Smt. Vibha Puri Das	Secretary
2.	Shri Ashok	Joint Secretary
3.	Dr. (Smt). Sadhana Rout	Joint Secretary
4.	Smt. Sarita Mittal	Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor
5.	Shri Siladitya Chaudhri	DDG
6.	Ms. Sangeeta Verma	Economic Adviser

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members of the Committee and also the representatives of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to the sitting of the Committee. The Chairman informed that the meeting had been convened for taking oral evidence on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas".

3. The Members then raised points/questions, which *inter-alia* related to :-

- (i) Higher dropout percentage of Scheduled Tribes children.
- (ii) Need for enhancement of budgetary allocation under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas.
- (iii) Salient features of the proposed Umbrella scheme for Education of ST children
- (iv) Need to conduct evaluation studies of Ashram Schools in all the States
- (v) Reasons for non-release of funds to many States under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas.

- (vi) Criteria for sanctioning of Ashram Schools.
- (vii) Lack of concern and sensibility about the needs of children in Ashram Schools and reported overcrowding in the dormitories of tribal students.

4. The representatives of the Ministry responded to most of the queries put forth by the Members to the extent possible and assured to furnish replies to those points which could not be replied to by 18th October, 2013.

5. At the end, the Chairman thanked the Secretary and other officials of the Ministry for giving valuable information to the Committee on the subject and expressing their views in a free and frank manner.

6. A verbatim of the proceedings was kept on record.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2013-14) HELD ON THURSDAY, 13th FEBRUARY, 2014

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1515 hrs. in Committee Room 'D', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Smt. Susmita Bauri
3. Shri Wakchaure Bhausahab R.
4. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya

RAJYA SABHA

5. Shri K.R. Arjunan
6. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
7. Shri Avtar Singh Karimpuri
8. Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi
9. Prof. Mrinal Miri
10. Shri Mohammad Shafi

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Devender Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Anita Jain - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting has been convened for consideration and adoption of draft Forty-fourth Report on the subject “Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas” of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

3. Thereafter, the Committee considered and adopted the Forty-fourth Report without any amendment.

4. The Committee authorized the Chairman to finalize the draft Report and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.