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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2014 - 2015)**

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

**(DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT)**

**Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations
contained in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and
Empowerment (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on "Demands for Grants (2014-15)".**

SIXTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

August, 2015/Shravana, 1937 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 10.8.2015

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 10.8.2015



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

August, 2015/Shravana, 1937 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2014-2015)**

SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Jasvantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor
3. Kunwar Bharatendra
4. Shri Santokh Singh Chaudhary
- *5. Shri Sher Singh Ghubaya
6. Shri Jhina Hikaka
7. Shri Prakash Babanna Hukkeri
8. Shri Bhagwant Khuba
9. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
10. Smt. Maragatham K.
11. Shri Kariya Munda
12. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
13. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
14. Sadhvi Savitri Bai Phule
15. Dr. Udit Raj
16. Smt. Satabdi Roy
17. Prof. Sadhu Singh
18. Smt. Neelam Sonkar
- *19. Smt. Mamta Thakur
- #20. Shri Tejpratap Singh Yadav
- **21. Vacant

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
- ##23. Dr. Tazeen Fatma
24. Shri Ahamed Hassan
25. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
26. Shri Prabhat Jha
27. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai
28. Shri Praveen Rashtrapal
29. Shri Nand Kumar Sai
30. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
31. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

Nominated w.e.f. 22.12.2014

Nominated w.e.f. 29.1.2015

* Nominated w.e.f 25.3.2015

** Shri Dilip Singh Bhuria expired on 24.6.2015

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director
4. Smt. Shilpa Kant - Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2014-15) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Sixteenth Report on the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on "Demands for Grants - 2014-15" relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

2. The First Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19th December, 2014. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 23rd April, 2015. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 6th August, 2015.

3. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix.

4. For facility of reference observations/recommendations/comments of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;

6th August, 2015
15 Shrawana, 1937 (Saka)

RAMESH BAIS
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

CHAPTER I

REPORT

1.1 The Report deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants, 2014-15 relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

1.2 The Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19th December, 2014. It contained six observations/recommendations. Replies of Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been examined and have been categorized as under: -

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Paragraph Nos. 2.8, 2.9, 2.19, 2.20 and 2.23.

(Total 5 - Chapter II)

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government:

-Nil-

(Chapter III)

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted:

-Nil-

(Chapter IV)

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are of interim in nature:

Paragraph No. 2.28.

(Total 1 - Chapter V)

1.3 The Committee desire that action taken replies on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in respect of the recommendation contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than three months of the presentation of the Report.

1.4 The Committee will now deal with some of the replies received from the Government which need reiteration or merit comments.

A. Under utilization of funds and reduction in allocation at Revised Estimates stage

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1, Para No. 2.8)

1.5 The Committee were constrained to note the under-utilization of funds in Plan allocations of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2013-14. Against a budgetary allocation of Rs. 6065 crore for the Department, the revised estimates were reduced to Rs. 5165 crore while the actual expenditure was Rs. 5084.86 crore. The Department too admitted before the Committee that under-utilization of funds has been a matter of worry for them too. Delays in receiving of proposals from the State Governments and the NGOs have been the major cause for shortfall in expenditure of allocated funds. In the year 2014-15, central assistance amounting to 84.58 per cent of the Budget was released to the State Governments for implementing the programmes and schemes of the Department. Taking cognizance of the revised expenditure norms and in order to ensure that there is no reduction in allocation at R.E stage in any scheme, the Committee recommended that the Department must impress upon the State Governments to forward the proposals of NGOs well in advance so that they could be processed timely and

pursue this matter with the State Governments. Similarly, the State Governments be also persuaded to send their proposals timely so that the funds are utilized fully.

The Committee also desired the Department to ensure proper co-ordination amongst State Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) to improve the utilization of funds with better outputs.

Reply of the Government

1.6 The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in their reply have stated:

"The Plan budget allocations of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment for the year 2014-15 was Rs. 6165 crore, the Revised Estimates was reduced to Rs. 5400 crore and the actual expenditure was Rs. 5350.54 crore which comes 99.08% against the Revised Estimates.

In order to avoid delays in receiving of proposals from the State Governments, during 2014-15, regular reminders have been issued at the levels of Joint Secretaries to all the States/UTs to furnish the requisite documents under all the Schemes for the Empowerment of the target groups of the Department, namely, (i) Scheduled Castes, (ii) Other Backward Classes, (iii) Senior citizens and (iv) Victims of Alcoholism and substance abuse. This matter of furnishing the stipulated documents in time was also discussed in the Annual Regional Review Meetings and Video Conferences with the Ministers of Social Welfare and the Secretaries/ Chief Secretaries of State Governments/UT Administrations held 22-08-2014, 28.10.2014 and 24-12-2014 respectively. A Regional conference of North Eastern States was held at Guwahati on 12.2.2015 wherein the urgency to submit the timely proposals was emphasised.

In order to bring greater transparency and speed in processing and releasing GIA to the NGOs, the Schemes of Assistance to Voluntary Organizations have been made online with effect from 2014-15. As per this system, applications by NGOs and processing of the applications in the State and in the Ministry till release of GIA has been made mandatorily online through the online portal of the Ministry.

The National Scheduled Castes Finance Development Corporation (NSFDC) and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) during the 2014-15 have fully utilised the funds allocated to them.

Both these Corporations have been given 'Excellent' rating by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) during their annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. For proper utilization of funds by National Backward Class Finance and Development Corporation, the department organizes regular meetings and video conferencing with the State Governments, UTs and NBCFDC. As regards utilization of funds by National Institute of Social Defence, efforts are being made to identify more number of organizations working in the field of social defence as per the mandate of National Institute of Social Defence."

1.7 The Committee note that despite their repeated advices to the Department, the phenomenon of reduction of funds at RE Stage could not be addressed. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Department must adopt more effective measures besides making existing mechanism more stringent so that there is full utilization of the allocated funds and no reduction at the RE level henceforth.

Taking cognizance of the fact that the Department has taken up the matter with the State Governments to furnish the requisite documents in time, the Committee desire that the Department should keep pursuing the matter constantly at regular intervals with the State Governments so that there is constant pressure on them to send the proposals/UCs/requisite documents to the Department in time.

B. Enhanced allocation for educational schemes for Scheduled Castes

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 2.19)

1.8 The Committee noted that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is mandated to empower the Scheduled Castes through implementation of educational schemes, notably, Post-Matric scholarship scheme and Pre-Matric scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean occupations'. The Committee observed that the actual expenditure under both the schemes was much higher *vis-à-vis* budgetary allocation. The Committee appreciated the efforts of the Department and desired that the matter may be taken up with the Ministry of Finance to increase the budgetary allocation for these Schemes.

The Committee also observed that for quick and flawless disbursement of the scholarship money to the students, the State Governments have been requested to put in place a national 'e-scholarship portal' and the Direct Benefit Transfer System in 121 districts of the country under which scholarship money would be transferred directly to the Aadhar enabled bank accounts of the individual beneficiaries on yearly basis has also been introduced.

The Committee were dismayed to note that the beneficiaries get the scholarship at the fag end of the year due to cumbersome procedures which defeats the very purpose of the scholarship. The Committee, therefore, impressed upon the Department to simplify the procedures so the beneficiaries receive the scholarship on monthly basis that too at the start of the academic session. The Committee also desired that a national 'e-scholarship portal' be put in place at the earliest so that the students can apply directly on the e-portal which would, in turn, save time and enable the Department to transfer the funds more efficiently. Having noted the role of

State Governments, the Committee desired that the State Governments be advised regarding benefits and importance of the scheme and impress upon them to submit the proposals timely to make the system of Direct Benefit Transfer a success.

Reply of the Government

1.9 The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in their reply have stated:

"(i) The department has been seeking additional budgetary support to meet the demands of various States/UTs under Centrally Sponsored Post Matric scholarship Scheme for SC students. In fact a demand of Rs.3890.82 crores was made, against the budget estimate of Rs.1500 crores for PMS (SCs). The scheme was projected to Ministry of Finance to meet the requirements of various States/UTs during 2014-15. Budget Estimate for the current financial year was marginally increased to Rs 1599.00 crore out of which an amount of Rs 1409.66 crore has already been disbursed to various State Governments/ UT Administrations on adhoc basis. Efforts are being made to get more funds for Post Matric Scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes at the highest level.

(ii) A National scholarship portal is under development by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (Diety). This is at an advanced stage, interaction meetings with all the stakeholders including the state Governments are being held by Diety. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has highlighted various issues involved in implementing the Schemes like Post Matric and Pre-Matric Scholarships for developing an efficient system.

(iii) The Planning Commission, now Neeti Aayog, has on the advice of PMO prepared a consolidated statement on the Central Government Scholarship Schemes in consultation with various Ministries with the ultimate objective to have uniform norms and simpler procedures. The process is underway.

(iv) The States/UTs are the implementing agencies for the major scholarship schemes of this Ministry. Due Central Assistance, after deducting the committed liability and unspent balances, is given to States/UTs as per the present scheme guidelines.

(v) The States have been asked to implement Direct Benefit transfer in all the scholarship schemes."

1.10 Taking note of the fact that actual expenditure under Post-Matric and Pre-Matric Scholarship Schemes for SCs was much higher vis-à-vis budgetary allocation, the Committee recommended that the Department should take up

the matter with the Ministry of Finance to increase the budgetary allocation for these Schemes. The Committee find that though the proposal had been forwarded to Ministry of Finance to enhance the allocation for these Schemes, yet it has not been implemented. The Committee desire that the matter be taken up again, albeit with more seriousness, with Ministry of Finance for increased allocation in the coming financial year. The Committee would like to be apprised of the present status in this regard.

The Committee further note that National e-scholarship portal is under development and Direct Benefit Transfer is still not implemented in all the States. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to give utmost importance to implement these two Schemes throughout the country without any further delay.

C. 'Nil' beneficiaries under 'Pre-matric' scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean occupation' by some States.

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4, Para No. 2.20)

1.11 The Committee noted that the proposal forwarded by the Department to the Ministry of Finance to enhance the rates of Post-matric scholarship for SC students has not been agreed to by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee desired the Department to take up the matter again with the Ministry of Finance with more effective reasoning such as popularity of the Scheme, keeping in view of the fact that the amount utilized under the Schemes is more than what has been allocated.

The Committee appreciated to note that the Pre-matric scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean' occupation has been revised and modified to *inter-alia* include changes in the pattern of Central Assistance, increase in the rates of scholarship and to make the scheme open ended to entitle all the eligible students to receive the scholarship without restricting the scholarship to the children of only existing manual scavengers. The Committee also observed that the number of beneficiaries, during the last three years, except eight States, is nil during 2013-14. As the amount released and utilized exceeds the amount demanded by the Department in 2013-14, the Committee wished to know the reasons for asking lesser funds/grant in 2014-15 and also the reasons for not utilizing the scholarship money at all by some States. The Committee recommended the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to seriously take up the issue with the State Governments where number of beneficiaries was 'nil'.

Reply of the Government

1.12 The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in their reply have stated:

- "(i) The issue has been again taken up with Ministry of Finance for increasing the BE allocation to meet the increased demand of Central Assistance, under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme SC Students.
- (ii) It is clarified that the Ministry has not asked for lesser funds for the year 2014-15 than those asked for during 2013-14, under the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of those engaged in 'Unclean' Occupations. The Budget estimates for both the years 2013-14 and 2014-15 for this Scheme was Rs. 10.00 crores. During 2013-14 additional funds were managed through re-appropriation to meet the increased requirement of Rs. 18.44 crore against the BE of Rs. 10.00 crore.
- (iii) In 2014-15 the expenditure under the Scheme was less due to the following reasons:-
 - a) Either proposals were not received from States/UTs, or they were incomplete in terms of the guidelines of the Scheme.
 - b) Some States like Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh had unspent balances from earlier years and hence did not avail of the Central Assistance during 2014-15.
 - c) Identification of beneficiaries was a problem for the State Governments.

All the States/UTs were advised to send proposals and utilize the available Central funds under Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Children of those engaged in 'Unclean' Occupations."

1.13 The Committee expressed their concern over not utilizing the scholarship money at all by some States in 2013-14 and the lesser demand put forth by the Ministry in 2014-15 for the scholarship scheme. The Ministry have attributed the major reasons for less expenditure during 2014-15 to receiving of late and/or incomplete proposals from States/UTs and problem in proper identification of beneficiaries. Expressing their displeasure over the callous approach of the States, the Committee desire that Ministry should set up a specific monitoring mechanism to pursue the States to send the proposals within the third quarter of the financial year. The Committee also desire the

Ministry to pursue the State Governments to set up a separate agency which should mandatorily include at least one member of the targeted section and set up a streamlined procedure to identify the eligible candidates for the Pre-matric scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean occupation'.

D. Revision of scholarship rates under Pre-matric scholarship to OBC students.

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 2.28)

1.14 The Committee noted that the Pre-matric scholarship to OBC students aims at motivating children of OBCs studying at Pre-matric stage. The Committee found that a miniscule amount of scholarship money is given to the students under the Pre-matric scholarship scheme for OBCs, both for the day scholars as well as for hostellers, which appears too less, to achieve the intended purpose. The Committee recommended that not only more funds be infused in this scheme but also the rates of scholarship be revised without delay. The Committee also desired that the income ceiling should also be revised and implemented with immediate effect so that more children can be covered under the Scheme in accordance with the OBC population in the country.

The Committee were concerned over under-utilization of funds due to pendency of Utilization Certificates from the State Governments/UTs. The Committee exhorted the Department to take firm and effective measures, have better and more stringent monitoring and co-ordination with State Governments/UTs to ensure timely receiving of UCs from them.

Reply of the Government

1.15 The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in their reply have stated:

"Upward revision of the scholarship rates and income ceiling for the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships for OBC Students, inter alia, was proposed under the Umbrella Scheme for OBCs. However, due to huge financial implications, the erstwhile Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure have advised to defer the proposal for the time being.

Further, on the advice of the Hon'ble Standing Committee, a proposal has been made for enhancing the rates of scholarship and also increase in the Central share, which is under consideration. The rates proposed are as follows:

<u>Classes:</u>	<u>Existing Rates</u>	<u>Proposed Rates</u>
<u>Day Scholars</u>		
Class I to V	Rs. 25/- p.m.	Rs.50/- p.m.
Class VI to VIII	Rs. 40/- p.m.	Rs.80/- p.m.
Class IX to X	Rs. 50/- p.m.	Rs.100/- p.m.
<u>Hostellers:</u>		
Class III to VIII	Rs. 200/- p.m.	Rs.400/- p.m.
Class IX to X	Rs. 250/- p.m.	Rs.500/- p.m.
The proposed Central and State share ratio is 75:25 in place of the existing 50:50 ratio.		

To get the timely UCs, BC Division has been conducting bi-monthly review meetings with the State Governments/UTs Administrations and regularly pursues the matter with them. As regards under-utilization of funds under the Scheme, it is stated that as on 31-3-2015, Rs 109.56 crore has been released against the revised allocation of Rs 116.63 crore which is 93.94%."

1.16 The Committee had desired the Ministry to pursue the Ministry of Finance to raise the budgetary funds and revise the rates of Pre-matric scholarship to OBC students. As the Ministry of Finance had advised the

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to defer the proposal for the time being regarding infusing more funds under scholarship scheme, the Committee desire that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment should now again take up the matter with Ministry of Finance for the next financial year. Taking note of the proposed/revised rates of scholarship by the Department which are under consideration, the Committee still feel that these rates are too low vis-a-vis the current Consumer Price Index. The Committee desire that action taken on their suggestion may be intimated to them.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (S. No. 1, Para 2.8)

2.1 The Committee are constrained to note the under-utilization of funds in Plan allocations of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2013-14. Against a budgetary allocation of Rs. 6065 crore for the Department, the revised estimates were reduced to Rs. 5165 crore while the actual expenditure was Rs. 5084.86 crore. The Department too admitted before the Committee that under-utilization of funds has been a matter of worry for them too. Delays in receiving of proposals from the State Governments and the NGOs have been the major cause for shortfall in expenditure of allocated funds. In the year 2014-15, central assistance amounting to 84.58 per cent of the Budget was released to the State Governments for implementing the programmes and schemes of the Department. Taking cognizance of the revised expenditure norms and in order to ensure that there is no reduction in allocation at R.E stage in any scheme, the Committee recommend that the Department must impress upon the State Governments to forward the proposals of NGOs well in advance so that they could be processed timely and pursue this matter with the State Governments. Similarly, the State Governments be also persuaded to send their proposals timely so that the funds are utilized fully.

The Committee also desire the Department to ensure proper co-ordination amongst State Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), National Backward

Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) to improve the utilization of funds with better outputs.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The Plan budget allocations of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment for the year 2014-15 was Rs. 6165 crore, the Revised Estimates was reduced to Rs. 5400 crore and the actual expenditure was Rs. 5350.54 crore which comes 99.08% against the Revised Estimates.

In order to avoid delays in receiving of proposals from the State Governments, during 2014-15, regular reminders have been issued at the levels of Joint Secretaries to all the States/UTs to furnish the requisite documents under all the Schemes for the Empowerment of the target groups of the Department, namely, (i) Scheduled Castes, (ii) Other Backward Classes, (iii) Senior citizens and (iv) Victims of Alcoholism and substance abuse. This matter of furnishing the stipulated documents in time was also discussed in the Annual Regional Review Meetings and Video Conferences with the Ministers of Social Welfare and the Secretaries/ Chief Secretaries of State Governments/UT Administrations held 22-08-2014, 28.10.2014 and 24-12-2014 respectively. A Regional conference of North Eastern States was held at Guwahati on 12.2.2015 wherein the urgency to submit the timely proposals was emphasised.

In order to bring greater transparency and speed in processing and releasing GIA to the NGOs, the Schemes of Assistance to Voluntary Organizations have been made online with effect from 2014-15. As per this system, applications by NGOs and processing of the applications in the State and in the Ministry till release of GIA has been made mandatorily online through the online portal of the Ministry.

The National Scheduled Castes Finance Development Corporation (NSFDC) and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) during the 2014-15 have fully utilised the funds allocated to them. Both these Corporations have been given 'Excellent' rating by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) during their annual review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. For proper utilization of funds by National Backward Class Finance and Development Corporation, the department organizes regular meetings and video conferencing with the State Governments, UTs and NBCFDC. As regards utilization of funds by National Institute of Social Defence, efforts are being made to identify more number of organizations working in the field of social defence as per the mandate of National Institute of Social Defence.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see para 1.7 of Chapter I of the Report.)

Recommendation (S. No. 2, Para 2.9)

2.3 The Committee are glad to note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has come up with new initiatives/schemes during 2014-15 which *inter-alia* include Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars with the Plan Outlay of Rs. 11 crore, Post-Matric Scholarship for Economically Backward Classes with the plan outlay of Rs. 9.50 crore and setting up of Helpline for Senior Citizens at National level with plan outlay of Rs. 5 crore. The Committee desire the Department to prepare a dedicated action plan and implement these schemes with proper co-

ordination with State Governments and other implementing agencies in order to check under-utilization of the funds.

Reply of the Government

2.4 In order to rehabilitate beggars/destitute, a Scheme for "Protection, Care and Rehabilitation of Destitutes" has been drafted/formulated and approved by the Hon,ble Minister, SJ&E. The Ministry is consulting other Ministries/ Departments to take the scheme more inclusive and to achieve convergence with similar schemes. It will be the Ministry,s endeavor to launch the sche as soon as possible.

Further, a new Scheme for EBCs, namely Post-Matric Scholarship for Economically Backward Classes has been launched during 2014-15 with a revised outlay of Rs.1.00 crore. The States, which are already implementing schemes for EBCs under their respective State plans have been identified, and funds are being released. For implementation of these schemes, the following Action plan will be followed:

- a) Regular Review Meetings with the State Governments
- b) Regular video conferencing with the State Governments.
- c) Performance of the scheme will be monitored through quarterly/annual progress reports furnished by the State Governments/UT Administrations.
- d) Nodal officers appointed by the Ministry will visit the State Governments for effective monitoring.
- e) Evaluation of the schemes will be made from time to time.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015)

Recommendation (S. No. 3, Para 2.19)

2.5 The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is mandated to empower the Scheduled Castes through implementation of educational schemes, notably, Post-Matric scholarship scheme and Pre-Matric scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean occupations'. The Committee observe that the actual expenditure under both the schemes was much higher *vis-à-vis* budgetary allocation. The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Department and desire that the matter may be taken up with the Ministry of Finance to increase the budgetary allocation for these Schemes.

The Committee also observe that for quick and flawless disbursement of the scholarship money to the students, the State Governments have been requested to put in place a national 'e-scholarship portal' and the Direct Benefit Transfer System in 121 districts of the country under which scholarship money would be transferred directly to the Aadhar enabled bank accounts of the individual beneficiaries on yearly basis has also been introduced.

The Committee are dismayed to note that the beneficiaries get the scholarship at the fag end of the year due to cumbersome procedures which defeats the very purpose of the scholarship. The Committee, therefore, impress upon the Department to simplify the procedures so the beneficiaries receive the scholarship on monthly basis that too at the start of the academic session. The Committee also desire that a national 'e-scholarship portal' be put in place at the earliest so that the students can apply directly on the e-portal which would, in turn, save time and enable the Department to transfer the funds more efficiently. Having noted the role of State Governments, the Committee desire that the State Governments be advised

regarding benefits and importance of the scheme and impress upon them to submit the proposals timely to make the system of Direct Benefit Transfer a success.

Reply of the Government

- 2.6 (i) The department has been seeking additional budgetary support to meet the demands of various States/UTs under Centrally Sponsored Post Matric scholarship Scheme for SC students. In fact a demand of Rs.3890.82 crores was made, against the budget estimate of Rs.1500 crores for PMS (SCs). The scheme was projected to Ministry of Finance to meet the requirements of various States/UTs during 2014-15. Budget Estimate for the current financial year was marginally increased to Rs 1599.00 crore out of which an amount of Rs 1409.66 crore has already been disbursed to various State Governments/ UT Administrations on adhoc basis. Efforts are being made to get more funds for Post Matric Scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes at the highest level.
- (ii) A National scholarship portal is under development by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (Diety). This is at an advanced stage, interaction meetings with all the stakeholders including the state Governments are being held by Diety. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has highlighted various issues involved in implementing the Schemes like Post Matric and Pre-Matric Scholarships for developing an efficient system.
- (iii) The Planning Commission, now Neeti Aayog, has on the advice of PMO prepared a consolidated statement on the Central Government

Scholarship Schemes in consultation with various Ministries with the ultimate objective to have uniform norms and simpler procedures. The process is underway.

- iv) The States/UTs are the implementing agencies for the major scholarship schemes of this Ministry. Due Central Assistance, after deducting the committed liability and unspent balances, is given to States/UTs as per the present scheme guidelines.
- (v) The States have been asked to implement Direct Benefit transfer in all the scholarship schemes.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see para 1.10 of Chapter I of the Report.)

Recommendation (S. No. 4, Para 2.20)

2.7 The Committee note that the proposal forwarded by the Department to the Ministry of Finance to enhance the rates of Post-matric scholarship for SC students has not been agreed to by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee desire the Department to take up the matter again with the Ministry of Finance with more effective reasoning such as popularity of the Scheme, keeping in view of the fact that the amount utilized under the Schemes is more than what has been allocated.

The Committee appreciate to note that the Pre-matric scholarship scheme for the children of those engaged in 'unclean' occupation has been revised and modified to *inter-alia* include changes in the pattern of Central Assistance, increase in the

rates of scholarship and to make the scheme open ended to entitle all the eligible students to receive the scholarship without restricting the scholarship to the children of only existing manual scavengers. The Committee also observe that the number of beneficiaries, during the last three years, except eight States, is nil during 2013-14. As the amount released and utilized exceeds the amount demanded by the Department in 2013-14, the Committee wish to know the reasons for asking lesser funds/grant in 2014-15 and also the reasons for not utilizing the scholarship money at all by some States. The Committee recommends the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to seriously take up the issue with the State Governments where number of beneficiaries was 'nil'.

Reply of the Government

- 2.8 (i) The issue has been again taken up with Ministry of Finance for increasing the BE allocation to meet the increased demand of Central Assistance, under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme SC Students.
- (ii) It is clarified that the Ministry has not asked for lesser funds for the year 2014-15 than those asked for during 2013-14, under the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of those engaged in 'Unclean' Occupations. The Budget estimates for both the years 2013-14 and 2014-15 for this Scheme was Rs. 10.00 crores. During 2013-14 additional funds were managed through re-appropriation to meet the increased requirement of Rs. 18.44 crore against the BE of Rs. 10.00 crore.
- (iii) In 2014-15 the expenditure under the Scheme was less due to the following reasons:-
- (a) Either proposals were not received from States/UTs, or they were incomplete in terms of the guidelines of the Scheme.

- (b) Some States like Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh had unspent balances from earlier years and hence did not avail of the Central Assistance during 2014-15.
- (c) Identification of beneficiaries was a problem for the State Governments.

All the States/UTs were advised to send proposals and utilize the available Central funds under Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Children of those engaged in 'Unclean' Occupations.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see para 1.13 of Chapter I of the Report.)

Recommendation (S. No. 5, Para 2.23)

2.9 The Committee note that budgetary allocation for Scheme of Up-gradation of Merit of SC students is Rs. 5.00 crore for the year 2014-15 and was Rs. 4.00 crore in 2011-12 which the Department was even unable to utilize fully in the last three years. Receipt of fewer proposals from the State Governments/UTs was attributed as a reason for lesser utilization of funds, under Plan head. The Committee find that only a small percentage of SC students is getting access to the scholarship that too in some States. Having noted the above facts, the Committee advise the Department to take up the matter with the Planning Commission to increase the budgetary allocation for the schemes so as to cover more deserving students in accordance with the SC population in the country. The Committee recommend that the Department, in co-ordination with the State Governments, should monitor the

Scheme and set a defined procedure to process the applications of SC students in a time bound manner to ensure that the eligible candidates get the scholarship in time and the funds too do not go unutilized.

Reply of the Government

2.10 The 'Upgradation of Merit of SC Students' Scheme is implemented through State Governments/UT Administrations and the admission and selection process of schools and students are left to the discretion of concerned State Governments. The proposals received from States/UTs are based on their financial requirements under the scheme for the respective year. Some States/UTs do not send their request for the Central Assistance for the entire number of slots allotted to them.

The Scheme has been revised w.e.f. 01.08.2013, covering 19 States/UTs with an enhancement in the number of awards from 1045 to 2050 and package grant from Rs.15,000/- to Rs.25,000/-. Prior to the revision, the scheme was applicable for residential schools only, which has now made applicable for both residential as well as non-residential schools. With the revisions in the scheme, coverage of students and utilization of funds would be increased.

The scheme is monitored by the State Governments/UT Administrations. At the beginning of each financial year, the State Governments/UT Administrations are requested to send proposals under the scheme. The proposals received are processed and admissible amount are released. The unspent balance pertaining to previous years, if any, is adjusted in the future release. Further, revision of the Scheme would be considered after gaining experience from the revised Scheme.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015.)

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

- NIL -

CHAPTER IV

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF
THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND HAVE BEEN
COMMENTED UPON BY THE COMMITTEE IN CHAPTER-I**

- NIL -

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE

Recommendation (S. No. 6, Para 2.28)

5.1 The Committee note that the Pre-matric scholarship to OBC students aims at motivating children of OBCs studying at Pre-matric stage. The Committee find that a miniscule amount of scholarship money is given to the students under the Pre-matric scholarship scheme for OBCs, both for the day scholars as well as for hostellers, which appears too less, to achieve the intended purpose. The Committee recommends that not only more funds be infused in this scheme but also the rates of scholarship be revised without delay. The Committee also desire that the income ceiling should also be revised and implemented with immediate effect so that more children can be covered under the Scheme in accordance with the OBC population in the country.

The Committee are concerned over under-utilization of funds due to pendency of Utilization Certificates from the State Governments/UTs. The Committee exhort the Department to take firm and effective measures, have better and more stringent monitoring and co-ordination with State Governments/UTs to ensure timely receiving of UCs from them.

Reply of the Government

5.2 Upward revision of the scholarship rates and income ceiling for the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships for OBC Students, inter alia, was proposed under the Umbrella Scheme for OBCs. However, due to huge financial implications, the

erstwhile Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure have advised to defer the proposal for the time being.

Further, on the advice of the Hon'ble Standing Committee, a proposal has been made for enhancing the rates of scholarship and also increase in the Central share, which is under consideration. The rates proposed are as follows:

<u>Classes:</u>	<u>Existing Rates</u>	<u>Proposed Rates</u>
<u>Day Scholars</u>		
Class I to V	Rs. 25/- p.m.	Rs.50/- p.m.
Class VI to VIII	Rs. 40/- p.m.	Rs.80/- p.m.
Class IX to X	Rs. 50/- p.m.	Rs.100/- p.m.
<u>Hostellers:</u>		
Class III to VIII	Rs. 200/- p.m.	Rs.400/- p.m.
Class IX to X	Rs. 250/- p.m.	Rs.500/- p.m.
The proposed Central and State share ratio is 75:25 in place of the existing 50:50 ratio.		

To get the timely UCs, BC Division has been conducting bi-monthly review meetings with the State Governments/UTs Administrations and regularly pursues the matter with them. As regards under-utilization of funds under the Scheme, it is stated that as on 31-3-2015, Rs 109.56 crore has been released against the revised allocation of Rs 116.63 crore which is 93.94%.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 1-11/2014-Plan Division dated 23rd April 2015)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see para 1.16 of Chapter I of the Report.)

**NEW DELHI;
6th August, 2015
15 Shravana, 1937 (Saka)**

**RAMESH BAIS
Chairperson
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment.**

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON THURSDAY, 6th
AUGUST, 2015**

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1650 hrs. in Committee Room 'D',
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Jhina Hikaka
3. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
4. Smt. Maragatham K.
5. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
6. Dr. Udit Raj

RAJYA SABHA

7. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
8. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
9. Shri Nand Kumar Sai
10. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
11. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
2. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration the following draft Reports of the Committee :-

(i) Sixteenth Action Taken Report on First Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2014-15) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

(ii) *****

(iii) *****

(iv) *****

4. The Chairperson then requested the Members to give their suggestions on the draft Reports. The Reports were adopted by the Committee without any change. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize these draft Reports and present the same to both the Houses.

5. *****

6. *****

7. *****

8. *****

9. *****

10. *****

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FIRST REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

	Total	Percentage
I. Total number of Recommendations	6	
II. Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: (Paragraph Nos. 2.8, 2.9, 2.19, 2.20 and 2.23)	5	83.33
III. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies: -Nil-	0	0
IV. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted: -Nil-	0	0
V. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature: (Paragraph No. 2.28)	1	16.67