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Title: Need to release central share of funds for post-matric scholarship for students belonging to SCs/STs in Tamil Nadu

DR. J. JAYAVARDHAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): Tamil Nadu is implementing the centrally sponsored scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes pursuing higher studies in recognized institutions. Under this scheme, 100 per cent Central Assistance is provided to all States/UTs beyond the committed liability. In 2015-16, the Government of Tamil Nadu had to incur a total expenditure of Rs. 1295.55 crores towards Post-Matric Scholarships, out of which Rs. 942 crores are the Government of India's share. For the period up to 2014-15, arrears totalling Rs. 1175.10 crores were pending. During 2015-16, so far, only Rs. 567.34 crores have been released by the Government of India, leaving a total balance of Rs. 1549.76 crores. The timely release of scholarships is very essential to keep the students, most of whom are from very poor families, adequately motivated to pursue their studies. Delay in the disbursement of scholarship undermines the credibility of the scheme. This is clearly a very important scheme to enable the weaker sections to move forward in life through education. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had already written a letter to Hon'ble Prime Minister in this regard. Hence, realizing the importance and sensitivity of this scheme, the Ministry of Finance should provide adequate funds to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to enable it to release the entire due of central share of Rs. 1549.76 crores to Tamil Nadu.