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Title: Need to restore funding pattern of pre-matric scholarships for Scheduled Caste students in Odisha - Laid

SHRIMATI PRATYUSHA RAJESHWARI SINGH (KANDHAMAL): Approximately 2 lakh Scheduled Caste students of class IX-X are provided pre-matric scholarships for Secondary Education in Odisha including my Kandhamal Parliamentary Constituency which comprises of largely SC-ST population. The Pre-matric Scholarship Scheme for SC students studying in class IX-X is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, wherein until FY 2016-17 the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment was providing 100% assistance under the scheme. Accordingly, during 2016-17, the Central share was Rs. 52.86 crore, while the State share was nil. However, it is a matter of great concern that from the FY 2017-18 onwards, the Ministry has revised the liability of the State Government towards pre-matric scholarship, wherein the State Government is to bear Rs. 52.86 crores, every year.

This unexpected change in the funding pattern was communicated recently by the Ministry, wherein the revised liability of the State has been made effective from the FY 2017-18. The abrupt departure in the funding pattern of the Ministry under the pre-matric scholarship programme will cause severe financial burden to the already stretched out State's resources. The Ministry of Social Justice should reconsider the matter and restore the funding pattern of 90:10 shares between the Centre and State government for smooth implementation of pre-matric scholarships for Scheduled Caste Students.