

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
EMPOWERMENT (2021-2022)**

**(SEVENTEENTH 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 Twentieth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on “Demands for Grants (2021-22)” of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

**TWENTY EIGHTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

**December, 2021/ Agrahayana, 1943 (Saka)**

## REPORT

### CHAPTER - I

1.1 This Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Twentieth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2021-22) pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

1.2 The Twentieth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 16th March, 2021. It contained 10 observations/recommendations. Replies of Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been examined and are categorized as under: -

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

**Paragraph Nos. 2.11, 3.17, 4.9, 4.10, 5.16 and 7.12**

**(Total : 6 - Chapter-II)**

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

**Paragraph Nos. 2.10 and 6.14**

**(Total : 2 - Chapter-III)**

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration:

**Paragraph No. 3.15**

**(Total : 1 - Chapter-IV)**

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

**Paragraph No. 3.16**

**(Total : 1 - Chapter- V)**

**1.3 The Committee desire that action taken notes on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken note 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 this Report.**

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

#### **A. THE POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR SC STUDENTS (PMS-SC)**

##### **Recommendation (Para No. 3.15)**

**1.5 The Committee had recommended in their Twentieth Report as under:-**

“The 60 year old Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste students guarantees financial assistance to fulfill the aspirations of those Scheduled Caste Students whose parents’ income does not exceed ₹ 2.5 lakh annually. The Committee note that only 113.15 lakh students have benefitted during the last two years *i.e.*, 2018-19 and 2019-20 upto 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020 with an expenditure of ₹ 8639.47 crore under this Scheme. The Committee feel that the number of beneficiaries should be much more *i.e.*, around 80 lakh per year to realize the number of 4 crore students, projected to be benefitted in the next 5 years. In the light of the decision that States have to give their share of 40 per cent of scholarships amount first and then the 60 per cent share of the Centre will be released to the students, the Committee were informed by the representatives of the Ministry that States liability has now been reduced and hence it is a welcome move. Nonetheless, all State Governments are not very efficient in giving their share on time, hence the Committee feel that an appropriate system may be developed so that

the students are not deprived of Scholarship in the absence or delay in providing share by the States. The Committee, therefore, recommend that adequate awareness may be created amongst the students so that maximum number of students are able to take the benefit of the Scheme particularly in view of the target fixed for next five years. The Committee also recommend that since the suggestions made in the recently conducted Evaluation Study of the Scheme are practical and worthy of consideration, hence those may be examined and implemented. The Committee also appreciate the concept of issuing of FreeShip Card, after verification of eligibility of the candidates under the Scheme, as this will prove to be very beneficial for the students to take admission in the institution of their choice anywhere in the country without paying any fee. The Committee desire that the Department should direct all the States/UTs to issue FreeShip Card to all the eligible students who have applied under the Scheme."

1.6 The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) in their action taken reply, have stated as follows:-

"During 2018-19 and 2019-20, the Scheme was based on the concept of committed liability of the States, wherein the States/UTs reported difficulties in making budget provision as per their committed liability. As a result of this, coverage of the students under the Scheme was comparatively low. The revised Scheme envisages covering over 63 lakh beneficiaries for the financial year 2021-22. With the changes made in the approach of the revised Scheme, it is expected that the coverage of beneficiaries shall rise continuously in the upcoming years which will enable the realization of the objective of the Scheme to cover nearly 4 crore students under the

Scheme by 2025-26.

In order to ensure that the students are not deprived of Scholarship in the absence or delay in providing share by the States, the concept of Freeship Card has been introduced in the Scheme guidelines. All eligible students shall be entitled to take admission in the institutions without payment of tuition fees and hostel fees as per guidelines. This Freeship Card shall make the student eligible to study in the institution without pre-payment of the fees, on the condition that as and when amount is released to the student's account, the institution would be intimated to collect the same from the student. To enable this, a Freeship Card will be issued by the State Government to the eligible students, as per the procedure detailed in the Scheme guidelines.

In order to create awareness amongst students so that maximum number of students are able to take the benefit of the Scheme, awareness drives shall be undertaken by the State Government/UTs about the Scheme through the Gram Panchayats Notice Boards, School Committees, and discussions in the parent teacher association meetings and other public awareness measures, in order to extend its coverage and also minimise any misuse by unscrupulous elements.

Detailed Scheme guidelines incorporating all such features have been issued and regular follow up is being done at different levels in order to ensure its implementation."

**1.7** While appreciating the initiative taken to issue 'Freeship Card' by State Governments to the eligible students for PMS-SC Scheme, so that they can take admission in the institutions without payment of tuition fees and hostel fees and are not deprived of Scholarship in the absence of or delay in providing share by the States, the Committee had desired adequate awareness to be created so that 4 crore students are covered in the said scheme by 2025-26. While the Ministry have stated about awareness drives at local levels, it seems from the action taken by the Department in this regard that so far no freeship cards have actually been issued. They do not find mention about any time period prescribed during which the State Governments have been asked to issue these Freeship Cards. Also, the overall beneficiary figures of the Scheme are hovering around 60 lakh per year, that is 20 lakh shortfall as per target of 80 lakh annually. In this connection, the Department seem to have not been able to pursue State Government machinery in the way which would result in the desired numbers. The Committee, therefore, strongly feel that the efficacy of awareness drives, once started, need to be constantly weighed and evaluated through various available means in the remaining 3 years so that the target to cover nearly 4 crore students under the Scheme by 2025-26 is achieved. The Committee would also like to be apprised of the State-wise number of beneficiaries of Freeship Cards since revision of the Scheme and would also expect the Department to ensure that the period of thirty days stipulated in the revised guidelines for issue of Freeship Cards is stringently complied by the respective State Governments.

**1.8 The Committee are disappointed with the silence of the Department with regard to their recommendation on the recently conducted Evaluation Study of the Scheme and its recommendations which were very pertinent and accordingly the Committee had recommended for examination and implementation of the same by the Department. No action has been reportedly taken in the Action Taken Notes. The Committee hence reiterate their recommendation for the Department to immediately examine the said Evaluation Study and report the action taken on these recommendations to the Committee.**

**1.9 The Committee had recommended in their Twentieth Report as under:-**

**B. MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS UNDER SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES**

**( Recommendation, Para 3.16)**

"The Committee are quite disturbed by cases reported about the alleged misappropriation of funds under scholarship Schemes for underprivileged sections in some States, which is stated to be currently under enquiry. While the Ministry representatives have been claiming that the system is fail-safe due to all transactions/verifications done online, a dedicated Portal, DBT and similar measures, which are definitely the need of the hour, it is disconcerting for the Committee to observe that such instances, however minuscule, would dent the confidence of students on Government Scholarship Schemes. While the Committee desire the Ministry to further plug all identified loopholes in the system, strengthening privacy of data and passwords and reduce all manual interventions, be it school personnel, banking intermediaries, NGOs or unauthorised persons, they are of the strong opinion that the Department should counsel the State

Governments to try to reach out to a sample size of beneficiary students directly to ascertain that they are not being duped in the pretext of Government scholarships, and that they are actually in receipt of the full amount of the entitled scholarship money for the term, as approved against their names in the Portal. The Committee are convinced that a minor's opinion can also lead to a major change at times and hence recommend that action should be taken on this aspect"

1.10 The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) in their action taken reply have stated as follows:-

"As regard to Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students, there have been cases of mis-appropriation of funds reported under Post-Matric SC Scholarship Scheme in a few States. However, the States are undergoing inquiries for the same and it is expected that reports with conclusive evidences shall be provided by the inquiry agency for necessary actions. Now, in the revised PMS-SC Scheme, a complete transformatory approach is envisaged.

The Scheme shall be run on an online platform with robust cyber security measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays. The National Scholarship Portal (NSP) would be suitably modified for this purpose. Apart from this, the States shall maintain a complete database of the beneficiaries under various other Scholarship Schemes to ensure de-duplication of the beneficiaries. The State shall undertake a full proof verification of the eligibility, caste status, Aadhar identification and bank account details on the online portal. All verification process of the students should be done using the above



authenticated databases automatically using the digital process with little or no manual intervention. There should be no system of verification by the institutions or the district level officers.

The entire Scholarship amount- both from the State and Central Government- including the tuition fee, academic allowance and any other admissible allowance will be paid directly into the account of the students only through DBT preferably through an Aadhar Based Payment System (Aadhar Payment Bridge) from 2021-22.

These aforementioned steps are expected to guarantee foolproof system from the invitations of applications to the final disbursement of Scholarship to students. Further, the Department shall counsel the State Governments to try to reach out to a sample of beneficiary students directly to ascertain that they are not being duped in the pretext of Governments Scholarships, and that they are in actual receipt of the full amount of the entitled scholarship money for the term, as approved against their names in the Portal."

**1.11 The Committee have time and again impressed upon the Department to build a foolproof system so that the students are not duped in the pretext of Governments Scholarships and are actually in receipt of the full amount of the entitled scholarship money for the term. However, several instances of irregularities are still being reported from various States. The Committee have been merely informed in the Action taken Notes that the Department are yet to modify the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) with robust cyber security measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays. The Committee wonder as to why the**

**Department has not been able to take action in time bound manner on this matter in the last one year since all the courses are time bound and lack of financial support would lead students to miss several opportunities. The Committee strongly opine that unless the Portal is modified quickly incorporating all the features required to make the system effective and foolproof, the revised PMS-SC Scheme may not take off as envisaged. The Committee would therefore, recommend that the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) should be modified urgently without any delay so that the necessary steps such as maintenance of database and verification of credentials of beneficiary students for the disbursement of Scholarship are timely completed and the delay in disbursing Scholarship to SC beneficiary is avoided. The Committee would also like to be informed on the matter, the outcome of the inquiries being conducted as well as on the status of disbursement of Scholarship in 2021-22.**

## CHAPTER-II

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation, Para No. 2.11)

2.1 From the deposition of the representatives of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, the Committee note that for the year 2021-22, certain reforms have been brought in to ensure financial prudence. Now, 33 Schemes run by the Department have been readjusted into 19 Schemes, which, further, are brought under five major heads namely PM-AJAY, SHREYAS (SC), SHREYAS (OBC), YASASVI (OBC) and SHRESTHA, which is expected to bring rationalization to avoid overlap and invite more synergy. The Committee understands the basic idea behind the step, that is to cut the flap in various Schemes meant for educational upliftment, through coaching and scholarships, of the students belonging to SC, OBC, EBC and DNT categories as well as Economic upliftment of these groups. While the desired impact of this rationalization can only be assessed in future financial years, the Committee understand that during the financial year 2020- 21, most of the activities of the Department were hampered due to the imposed lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic in many States where the application invitations, processing and disbursal of scholarships had remained suspended, despite the Department releasing the first installment of 75% of the Central Assistance in the first quarter of 2020-21 itself. Another substantial change in one of the most prominent Scheme of Post Matric Scholarships for SC students, as observed by the Committee, is that the Committed Liability between the Centre and the States has been revised to a fixed sharing pattern of 60:40, in order to increase the Central share to 60% with the rider that the States/UTs will have to disburse their 40% share by 28.2.2021 followed by the Central share disbursal of 60% by 31.3.2021. In the wake of aforesaid changes, the Committee desire to know whether this arrangement was followed by all States/UTs or not, and the defaulters, if any. Overall, the Committee feel that the present financial year is going to be extremely challenging to the Department as they will not only have to compensate for the loss suffered by students due to non-receipt/delayed receipt of scholarships but would also have to ensure that the said rationalization of Schemes actually works leading to more synergy for the

**educational upliftment of the deprived section of students all over the country. Hence, at the action taken stage, the Committee desire that the Ministry need to elaborate further on their overall financial performance for Financial Year 2020-21 and the progress made in the current Financial Year 2021-22 in running their Schemes in revised formats and utilizing given allocation in an optimal fashion.**

### **Reply of the Government**

2.2 In FY 2021-22 the Schemes having similar objectives have been proposed to be rationalized/restructured/renamed. Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Expenditure) in its meeting held on 19.03.2021 considered and recommended the proposal of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for the merger/rationalization of schemes of the Department for the year 2021-22 to 2025-26. The recommendations of EFC are under process for obtaining the approval of the Competent Authority. The proposed rationalization/merger is as under:

- (i) Under Scheduled Caste Division, the 4 Schemes having similar objective namely a) National Fellowship for SCs, b) National Overseas Scholarship for SCs, c) Top Class Education for SCs, d) Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs are proposed to be merged into one scheme namely Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs.
- (ii) The schemes namely a) Pradhan Mantri Adharsh Gram Yojana, b) Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana, c) Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan are proposed to be merged into scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY).
- (iii) The scheme namely Assistance to Voluntary Organizations. for SCs is proposed to be renamed as Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESHTA) for SC. The schemes namely a) Pre-matric Scholarships for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation, b) Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs are proposed to be merged into one scheme namely Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others.
- (iv) Under Social Defence division, the schemes namely a) National Action Plan for Senior Citizens, b) Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana are proposed to be merged into one scheme namely Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY).

(v) The scheme namely a) Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars b) Scheme for Transgender Persons are proposed to be merged into Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE)

(vi) Under OBC Division, the Schemes namely Pre-Matric Scholarship to OBCs b) Post-Matric Scholarship for OBCs c) Post Matric Scholarship for Economically Backward Classes, d) Scheme for Educational and Economical Development of DNTs are proposed to be into PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs.

(vii) The scheme namely a) Interest Subsidy on Overseas Studies of OBCs, b) National Fellowship for OBCs and EBCs are proposed to be merged into Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for OBCs and EBCs

(viii) The scheme namely Assistance for Skill Development of OBCs, DNTs and EBCs is renamed as Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) for OBC & Others and Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) for SCs.

(ix) The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT/NT/SNTs (SEED) is also proposed to be started from 2021-22 as new scheme.

(x) With regard to online monitoring mechanism, the existing scheme of Information and Mass Media has been restructured into Information, Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit (I-MESA) to bring in aspects of monitoring, evaluation and Social Audit of all schemes Accordingly, the allocation of Budget made into (19) schemes for the FY 2021-22. The Scheme wise Budget Estimate (BE) of the Department is attached in Annexure-II.

#### Annexure-II

Distribution of Budget of the Department of SJE 2021-22		
		<i>(Rs. in crore)</i>
S.No.	Programme/Schemes	BE 2021-22
<b>SCD Division</b>		
1	Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students	3415.62
2	<b>Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS)</b>	
	National Fellowship for SCs	300.00
	National Overseas Scholarship for SCs and NTs/landless laboureres ets.	30.00
	Top Class Education for SCs	70.00
	Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs	50.00

	<b>Total</b>	<b>450.00</b>
3	<b>Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM AJAY)</b>	1800.00
	Special Central Assistance to SCSP	
	Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana	
	Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana	
4	Strengthening of machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989	600.00
5	<b>Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESTHA)</b>	200.00
6	State Sch. Castes Development Corporations (SCDC)	25.00
7	Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)	100.00
8	Pre Matric Scholarship for SC students and others	725.00
9	Vanchit Ikai Samooh aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yoajana for SCs	100.00
10	Venture Capital Funds for SCs Entrepreneurs (VCF-SC)	100.00
11	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) SC	60.00
	<b>Total SCD Division</b>	<b>7575.62</b>
	<b>% Share of SCs in total Schemes allocation</b>	<b>75.00</b>
	<b>Social Defence (SD) Division</b>	
12	<b>Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)</b>	300.00
13	National Action Plan on Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)	260.00
14	<b>Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood &amp; Enterprize (SMILE)</b>	
	Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging	50.00
	Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons	20.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70.00</b>
	<b>Total Social Defence</b>	<b>630.00</b>
	<b>Backward Classes (BC) Division</b>	
15	<b>PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI) for OBC and others</b>	
	Post Matric Scholarship for OBCs/EBCs/DNTs	1300.00
	Pre Matric Scholarship for OBCs/EBCs/DNTs	250.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1550.00</b>
16	<b>Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for OBCs and EBCs</b>	
	National Fellowship for OBCs	100.00
	Interest Subsidy on Overseas Studies of OBCs & EBCs	30.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130.00</b>
17	Boys and Girls Hostel for OBCs	30.00
18	Vanchit Ikai Samooh aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yoajana for OBCs	50.00
19	Venture Capital Fund for Backward Classes Entrepreneurs (VCF-BC)	20.00

20	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) OBC and Others	40.00
21	Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT/N/SN (SEED)	50.00
	<b>Total Backward Classes Division</b>	<b>1870.00</b>
22	Information, Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit (I-MESA)	25.00
<b>Grand Total for all schemes of the Department</b>		<b>10100.62</b>
<b>Non Schemes</b>		
	<b>Establishment</b>	
1	Secretariat	67.00
2	NCSC	27.00
3	NCSK	10.00
4	NCBC	12.00
5	DWBDNCs	5.00
	<b>Total Establishment</b>	<b>121.00</b>
	<b>Autonomous Bodies</b>	
6	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Foundation	1.00
7	National Institute of Social Defence	20.00
8	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre	25.00
	<b>Total Autonomous Bodies</b>	<b>46.00</b>
	<b>Investments</b>	
9	National SC Finance and Dev Corporation	100.00
10	National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation	50.00
11	National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation	100.00
	<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>250.00</b>
	<b>Total Non Schemes</b>	<b>417.00</b>
	<b>Grand Total Schemes + Non Schemes</b>	<b>10517.62</b>

Further, with regard to Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students, it is submitted that the revised funding pattern including other transformatory changes were approved by the Cabinet in December, 2020. After detailed consultations with the States and other stakeholders, the scheme guidelines were issued in March, 2021.

In order to ensure that the benefits of the revised funding pattern reach all the States/UTs, deliberations were held with State Authorities at various levels on regular intervals. D.O letters were written to State Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries in

order to ensure that the State Governments submit the proposals on time as the time left was very short. The Committee will appreciate that in the month of March, 2021 itself, the Department released an amount of Rs. 2692.67 crore under the Post Matric Scholarship scheme for SC Students and has been able to utilize Rs. 4010.16 crore as against the Revised Estimate of Rs 3815.87 crore during 2020-21 under the Scheme. The scheme-wise financial performance for Financial Year 2020-21 is at Annexure-I.

**Annexure-I**

<b>Distribution of funds in Schemes of Department of Social Justice &amp; Empowerment in FY 2020-21</b>				
<i>(Rs. in crore)</i>				
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Programme/Schemes</b>	<b>BE 2020-21</b>	<b>RE 2020-21</b>	<b>Exp.2020-21</b>
	<b>SCD Division</b>			
1	Post Matric Scholarship for SCs	2987.33	3815.87	4010.16
2	Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs	30.00	30.00	11.97
3	Pradhan Mantri Adharsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)	700.00	300.00	216.52
4	Strengthening of machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989	550.00	600.00	593.39
5	Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana	30.00	30.00	56.40
6	Assistance to Vol. Orgns. for SCs	100.00	125.00	55.81
7	Pre-matric Scholarships for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation	25.00	27.00	26.81
8	State Sch. Castes Development Corporations	50.00	20.00	15.86
9	Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan	1200.00	300.00	387.00
10	National Fellowship for SCs	300.00	125.00	119.00
11	Self Employment Scheme of Liberation & Rehabilitation of Scavengers	110.00	30.00	16.60
12	National Overseas Scholarship for SCs	20.00	30.00	32.92
13	Top Class Education for SCs	40.00	50.00	52.88
14	Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs	700.00	600.00	569.52
15	VISWAS YOJANA (SC)	0.00	32.13	10.00
16	Venture Capital Funds for SCs	65.00	40.00	30.00
17	Credit Gurantee fund for SCs	1.00	0.00	0.00
	<b>Total SCD Division</b>	<b>6908.33</b>	<b>6155.00</b>	<b>6204.84</b>
	<b>Social Defence, Media and Research</b>			
18	Information & Mass Education Cell	20.00	5.00	2.78
19	Assistance to VOs. for Providing Social Defence Services	4.00	3.00	3.00



20	National Action Plan for Senior Citizens	200.00	150.00	130.31
21	National Action Plan on Drug Demand Reduction	260.00	180.00	149.43
22	Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars	100.00	0.00	0.00
23	Scheme for Tansgender Persons	10.00	0.00	0.00
24	Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana	1.00	0.00	26.50
	<b>Total Social Defence</b>	<b>595.00</b>	<b>338.00</b>	<b>312.02</b>
	<b>Backward Classes Division</b>			
25	Pre-matric Scholarship to OBCs	250.00	175.00	165.85
26	Assistance for Skill Development of OBCs, DNTs and EBCs	50.00	50.00	47.29
27	Boys & Girls Hostels for OBCs	50.00	35.00	31.59
28	Post-Matric Scholarship for OBCs	1415.00	1100.00	1159.59
29	Scheme for Educational and Economical Development of De-notified and Nomadic Tribes	10.00	10.00	9.00
30	Post Matric Scholarship for Economically Backward Classes	25.00	25.00	25.00
31	Interest Subsidy on Overseas Studies of OBCs	35.00	35.00	32.61
32	National Fellowship for OBCs and EBCs	120.00	45.00	33.00
33	VISWAS YOJANA (OBCs)	0.00	32.00	10.00
34	Venture Capital Fund for Backward Classes	60.00	10.00	0.00
	<b>Total Backward Classes Division</b>	<b>2015.00</b>	<b>1517.00</b>	<b>1513.93</b>
	<b>Grand Total for all schemes of the Department</b>	<b>9518.33</b>	<b>8010.00</b>	<b>8030.79</b>
	<b>Non Schemes</b>			
	<b>Establishment</b>			
1	Secretariat	60.00	55.54	51.36
2	NCSC	25.00	25.00	15.83
3	NCSK	10.00	5.95	4.31
4	NCBC	8.00	10.00	9.39
6	DWBDNCs	1.24	0.30	0.15
	<b>Total Establishment</b>	<b>104.24</b>	<b>96.79</b>	<b>81.04</b>
	<b>Autonomous Bodies</b>			
7	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Foundation	1.00	1.00	1.00
8	National Institute of Social Defence	35.00	4.70	28.88
9	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre	25.00	25.00	25.00
	<b>Total Autonomous Bodies</b>	<b>61.00</b>	<b>30.70</b>	<b>54.88</b>
	<b>Investments</b>			
10	National SC Finance and Dev Corporation	180.00	0.00	0.00
11	National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation	40.00	40.00	40.00
12	National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation	200.00	30.07	30.00

	<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>420.00</b>	<b>70.07</b>	<b>70.00</b>
	<b>Total Non Schemes</b>	<b>585.24</b>	<b>197.56</b>	<b>205.92</b>
	<b>Grand Total Schemes + Non Schemes</b>	<b>10103.57</b>	<b>8207.56</b>	<b>8236.71</b>
	<b>Amount met from SCWF in RVY and NISD</b>			54.38
	<b>Net Expenditure</b>			8182.33
	<b>Expenditure in % of Total Budget</b>			<b>99.69%</b>

**(Recommendation, Para 3.17)**

**2.3 Now, as the COVID-19 vaccination is gaining speed, the Committee opine that the reopening schools in full capacity and the resultant formalities and verifications etc. for disbursement of scholarships will perhaps pick up in the later part of the current financial year. While the disbursement of scholarships has been made online, the Committee feel that fraudulent activity by unscrupulous elements in schools, banks, NGOs, VOs, etc., who find to ways to circumvent the processes for their personal gains, is still a bitter reality. Hence, the Committee recommend that the Department should not only ensure that the proposed revision in the Schemes are implemented effectively but the online portal for scholarships should also have enough security features to detect any tempering in the passwords/codes, in consultation with NIC.**

**Reply of the Government**

2.4 To ensure that any fraudulent activity by unscrupulous elements in schools, banks, NGOs, VOs, etc. does not happen, many rigid steps have earmarked under the revised PMS-SC scheme, some of which are mentioned as follows:

- i. The National Scholarship Portal shall be integrated with the AISHE/UDISE portal for pulling the data about the institution in which the student has taken admission.
- ii. The States shall undertake fool-proof verification of the eligibility, caste status, Aadhaar identification and bank account details on the online portal.
- iii. There shall be no upload of any documents or any certificates into the system. All data should be auto-verified by linking databases through digilocker or any such mechanism.

- iv. All verification process of the students should be done using the above authenticated databases automatically using the digital process with little or no manual intervention. There should be no system of verification by the institutions or even the district level officers.
- v. A suitable system will be put in place for taking Aadhaar based attendance system which is non-intrusive and automatic. Till such a system is finalized by the Central Govt., the institution shall upload the attendance of the scholarship holder every month in the Attendance module that would be developed in the IT system.
- vi. There shall be no system of calling for the bank account details of the students and authenticating it. All payments should preferably go through Aadhaar Based Payment System.
- vii. Apart from this, the States shall maintain a complete database of the beneficiaries under various other scholarship schemes to ensure de-duplication of the beneficiaries.
- viii. The portal will make arrangements so that the students, once declared blacklisted, may not be able to apply for scholarship again.

**(Recommendation, Para 4.9)**

**2.5 The Committee finds that the two Schemes viz. Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs and Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships for the children of those who are engaged in unclean occupation have now merged into Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others. The budgetary allocation has also been combined from the year 2021-22. The Committee find that under the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs, 26.30 lakh and 27.00 lakh students were respectively benefitted in the years 2018-19 and 2019- 20, and that 30 lakh beneficiaries are expected to be covered till 31 December, 2021 whereas in the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation, the number of beneficiaries increased from 2000 to 2 lakh in 2019- 20 in one year and 50 lakh beneficiaries are expected to be covered till 31 December, 2021. The Committee note that the expected figures of beneficiaries this year are much higher in Pre-Matric Scholarships for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation as compared to the Pre-Matric Scholarships for SCs, and desire to be apprised of the reasons thereof. The Committee feel that the number of beneficiaries in both the Schemes is much less as compared to their existing population and are, therefore, of the strong opinion that evaluation study needs to be conducted periodically by an independent Research Organization and their recommendations should be expeditiously examined and implemented which, presently is not case as action has been delayed on the study conducted in the year 2019-20. The Committee urge that delay in disbursal of scholarships to the beneficiaries in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 pandemic should be expedited this year so that the education of the beneficiaries is not disrupted.**

## **Reply of the Government**

2.6 The two Schemes viz. Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs and Scheme of Pre- Matric Scholarships for the children of those who are engaged in unclean occupation have now merged into Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others. The budgetary allocation has also been combined from the year 2021-22. During 2020-21, due to the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, the data regarding the number of beneficiaries reported by the States/UTs were on lower side. As the schools remained closed for almost complete year, many States/UTs were not able to utilize the funds and cover all the beneficiaries. As a result, over 30 lakh students only were covered under the scheme. Further, with continuous follow-ups with the states implementing the Pre-Matric Unclean occupation scheme, it is highly expected that the States/UTs shall submit the comprehensive proposals under the combined scheme that may eventually increase the beneficiary coverage in the upcoming years. Further, in 2021-22, as it is expected that with the continuous efforts of the Governments, the schools shall reopen and the process of scholarships run smoothly. Also, with the re-design of the National Scholarship Portal and newly adopted approach under the combined scheme, increased coverage of the beneficiaries is highly anticipated.

It is informed that the central release of funds under both the schemes for the FY 2020- 21 has been done and the continuous follow-ups with the States regarding complete utilization of the funds by the States is ensured. As communicated by the States/UTs, the disbursement of scholarships is under process and no eligible beneficiaries shall be left out from the coverage.

Further, the evaluation study under the respective schemes is conducted periodically and the recommendation of the study is taken on board in the combined scheme of Pre-matric Scholarship for SC Students and others.

### **(Recommendation, Para 4.10)**

**2.7 The Committee would also like to highlight that in remote and backward areas of the country, broadband services are not available optimally to students due to which some delay can be expected in filing all requisite data online for scholarships. The Committee feel that a reasonable relaxation in timelines can be considered by the Government for such areas, in consultation with the stakeholders, and hence desire that this matter may be discussed in the next meeting between the Department and the stakeholders/State Welfare Ministers & Secretaries.**

## **Reply of the Government**

2.8 The Department understands that the non-availability of the broadband services in the remote and backward areas of the country may cause some delay in filing all requisite data online for scholarships. The relaxation in timelines may be considered by the Government for such areas and the matter shall be discussed with the representatives of the State Governments for resolving any issues on this account.

### **(Recommendation, Para 5.16)**

**2.9 The Committee note with distress that while the Government is making tremendous efforts to get rid of the scourge of untouchability in the country by enacting various laws and rules, its practice still exists in various forms. As per National Crime Record Bureau, 2,02,427 atrocity cases against SCs and 33,949 cases against STs have taken place in the country from 2015 to 2019. Unfortunately, this figure may actually be higher as several cases go unreported. The Committee feel that sincere efforts at the execution level to create awareness as well as sensitize people to come out of their prejudices and biases against SCs and create an equal society are urgently required. Some of the States still have a glaring number of reported atrocity cases despite prevailing laws/rules. The Committee hence feel that the frequency of awareness programmes need to be enhanced and penal provisions under the law for offenders are required to be adequately publicized, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. In line with the existing Scheme for incentivizing inter-caste marriages, more Schemes are required to be introduced particularly by the Governments of those States, where a very large number of cases are reported, with proper monitoring mechanism to promote social integration and harmony and remove practice of untouchability and caste based discrimination. The Committee also observe that many cases of atrocities keep on lingering in courts for several years despite the fact that financial provision is made every year with regard to the strengthening of courts to quickly dispose of the cases. The Committee, therefore, recommend that additional measures need to be developed in coordination with State Governments so that the objectives of the law against untouchability, as enshrined in the Constitution are achieved.**

## **Reply of the Government**

2.10 It is mentioned that since 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects mentioned in the seventh schedule of the constitution, the responsibility for the Implementation of the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 rests with the State Govt./ UT administrations. At the central level, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for implementation of the PCR Act, 1955 and the SC and the ST (PoA) Act, 1989, Central Assistance is released to the States/UTs for the effective implementation of these Acts under various components inter alia Awareness Generation and Publicity. The Central Government also from time to time advises the State Government/UTs to implement the provisions of the Act in letter and spirit and also for establishment of exclusive special courts for effectively implementing the provisions under the Act. The States where less number of cases are there, such States have designated Session

Courts as Special Courts for the disposal of cases under the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 as specified in the Act.

Further, vide DO letter dated 06.03.2020 by the Secretary, SJ&E, it has been advised to the State Governments/UTs that they may take the help of Non Government organizations working at the State, District, Block and Village level especially in sensitive areas not only to prevent the occurrence of crime but also to handle effectively the atrocity like situations and to take preventive measures against the persons who commits atrocities against the SCs and STs. They may also launch an awareness programme through print and electronic media to aware the general public about the provisions of PoA Act and PoA Rules.

As an additional measure, for the real time monitoring of the cases under the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 and for the timely grievance redressal, work for setting up of a National Helpline for Atrocities against SCs/STs is in process wherein status of the grievances can be tracked online as well as performance of the States/UTs based on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will also be available on the dashboard. It will be helpful in ensuring compliance of the provisions of the Act by the States/UTs.

**(Recommendation, Para. 7.12)**

**2.11 The Committee commend the fact that the Department have been utilizing nearly entire allocation of funds meant for the Umbrella Scheme of NAPDDR, under which financial assistance is provided to States/UTs for preventive education and awareness programmes for drug demand reduction except in the year 2020-21 where expenditure was less due to COVID-19 related lockdown. However, the outcome has not been very encouraging so far despite the Department sanctioning grants to State/UT Governments, NGOs etc. for preventive education, awareness generation, running and maintenance of integrated rehabilitation centres. The drug abuse problem has been growing dangerously in the country. The Committee feel that lack of sincerity on the part of executing agencies, lack of coordination/monitoring of the executing agencies as well as lack of awareness about the ill-effects of drugs could be the possible reasons. The situation seems to be alarming in the country now as NDDTC, AIIMS have found in 2019 that 1 crore 18 lakh children in the age-group of 10-17 years were addicted to drugs. The Committee are perturbed to more that despite such a precarious situation, the Department had to close down several drug de-addiction Centres across the Country due to irregularities found after their inspection. In such circumstances, the Committee cannot but recommend that stringent mechanism should be developed with an element of fixing responsibility on the concerned officers so that the objectives laid down to achieve the goals are accomplished. The Committee desire that the educational awareness programmes are required to be launched at school/college level so that the young generation do not get trapped in drug abuse and unscrupulous persons luring impressionable teenagers to try drugs for a short-term pleasure are nabbed and severely punished. The Committee also urge the Department to explore seeking cooperation of various Parent Associations in addressing the increasing trend of party drugs, tobacco and**

alcohol among school children/young adults, which, according to the Ministry, were 118,00,000 in number as per a 2019 survey. For child addicts among rag pickers and other vulnerable sections, NGOs/VOs having a successful track record in the field, can be explored. The Committee find that the Department have launched 'NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan' in 272 identified vulnerable districts with an aim to create awareness about the ill effects of substance abuse among the youth, with special focus on higher education institutes, university campuses, schools and reaching out into the community and garnering community involvement and ownership of the Abhiyan. The Committee desire to know its achievement this year. Further, they recommend that the Department should direct all the State Governments/UT Administrations to identify the districts for conducting such Abhiyans at all the levels on their respective States/UTs, and involve peoples' representatives too in mobilizing their constituents to take part in such campaigns. The ODICs in various States, which are currently 94 only, can also be set up in hitherto unserved States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Goa, Karnataka etc. The Committee urge the Department to bring these States on board too.

### **Reply of Government**

2.12 The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment under the Scheme for National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) has been providing financial assistance for running and maintaining various projects like Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA), Outreach and Drop In Centres (ODICs), Community Based Peer Led Interventions (CPLIs) and Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATFs) in Government Hospitals.

The Ministry conducted the first ever Comprehensive National Level Survey published in 2019 to assess the issue of the substance abuse in the country. The National Survey on pattern of Substance Abuse gives detailed information on the usage of various kinds of substances on a national and state level along with information on the different age-groups using these substances. The findings of this survey have helped in chalking out and the implementation of NAPDDR and have also led to the actions being more focused in fighting the issue of substance abuse in country.

To achieve the objectives laid down in the scheme guidelines and for better implementation of the scheme at ground level, this Ministry is taking all measures and actions needed to strengthen the mechanism for demand reduction and control of use of substances. Several organizations working the field of substance use supported by the Ministry for carrying out various measures for demand reduction, awareness generation and rehabilitation. The eligible organizations are required to apply their applications for financial assistance on e-anudaan portal of this Ministry along with all the relevant documents and utilization certificates against the previous year grant-in-aid (GIA) released to it. This Ministry has established a National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention (NCDAP) at National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), New Delhi to serve as an apex body for training, research and documentation in the field of alcoholism and drug demand reduction. It would be responsible for conceptualizing, framing and implementing the activities of the NAPDDR across the country and liason with various

stakeholders for conduction of programmes covered under the NAPDDR. For this purpose, experts/consultants on the subject would be engaged by NISD as per prevailing norms of the Government of India. Further, the Ministry has designated Organizations/Institutions of repute with adequate experience in the field of Drug Demand Reduction and having consistently good track record as State Level Coordinating Agency (SLCA) following the prescribed procedure. SLCAs, so designated, are essentially responsible for devolution of the mandate of NCDAP in their jurisdictional area. The GIAs to the organizations are subject to satisfactory inspection of the organization by PMU/ State Government/ UT/ SLCA officials. Further, this Ministry aims to set up District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC) preferably in each district headquarter or suitably accessible place where rent free accommodation is provided by the district administration. These DDACs would provide comprehensive facilities hitherto being provided by IRCA, ODIC & CPLI together. The functioning of DDAC will be monitored by the Committee headed by the District Magistrate, which has been formed under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA). Additionally, retired eminent personalities of the Districts, activists, Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Department (HoD)/Principal, researcher, scholars and so on may be co-opted by Chairman as the members of the Committee.

The Ministry has launched Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) in 272 identified vulnerable districts with an aim to create awareness about ill effects of substance abuse among the youth, with special focus on higher education institutes, university campuses, schools and reaching out into the community and garnering community involvement and ownership of the Abhiyaan. These 272 districts which were identified as most vulnerable to substance abuse were selected on the basis of the findings of the National Survey on Pattern of Substance Use conducted by the Ministry and inputs received from Narcotics Control Bureau. The Abhiyaan was launched on 15th August 2020 by dignitaries such as District Magistrates/Collectors, Ministers, MPs in their respective states and districts. The Abhiyaan will be steered, implemented and monitored by the District Level Nasha Mukta Bharat Committee which will be chaired by the District Collector/Magistrate. These committees have been formed in the identified districts and are actively working towards making their districts free from Substance Abuse. The Abhiyaan lays special emphasis on garnering partnerships with stakeholders such as women, youth, educational institutions and civil societies to extend the reach of the Abhiyaan and ensure the message is reached out through those impacted directly or indirectly by substance abuse. The Abhiyaan also has a strong social media presence on the platforms of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube wherein updates are shared regularly on the activities being undertaken across the country. The following are the milestones so far:

- i. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material such as Handbooks, Pamphlets, posters, informative PPTs and scripts for community address have been shared with the districts in Hindi and English along with a state-wise list of resource persons who are subject matter experts for training purposes.
- ii. More than 8000 Master Volunteers have been selected and trained to lead the Abhiyaan activities in the 272 identified districts. They are involved in conducting various activities on-ground and also forming partnerships with various institutions present in their districts for a holistic implementation of the Abhiyaan.



- iii. Till now through various activities such as mass awareness sessions with various stakeholders, gram sabhas, sessions in educational institutions, awareness rallies, nukkad nataks, competitions, celebration of days related to substance abuse, mini marathons & runs and city-wide campaigns have been undertaken on-ground and have reached out to 80+ lakh people across the country so far.
- iv. More than 35 lakh youth have actively participated in the activities of the Abhiyaan and spreading on-ground the message against substance use. Around 4,000+ Yuva Mandals, NYKS & NSS Volunteers, Youth Clubs have also been formed in schools and colleges and have participated in activities of the Abhiyaan.
- v. The contribution of 28+ Lakh women have also been vital in reaching out to a larger community through the Anganwadi & ASHA Workers, ANMs, Mahila Mandals & Women SHGs.
- vi. Across the country till now, 13+ lakh students have been reached with events, competitions and sessions organized in 6000+ schools on themes of Substance Abuse. Teachers and Parents have also been involved in these activities so that the issue of youth getting into substance abuse is addressed both at school and home.
- vii. Social media has effectively been utilized to spread the message of the Abhiyaan online by creating handles on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram and sharing daily updates on them. 4,000+ posts on activities related to the Abhiyaan have been shared through these social media handles so far.
- viii. An internship programme was also initiated where 180+ students worked as Social media interns reached out to 13+ lakh people across the country in 3.5 months using their social media handles.
- ix. An Android based mobile Application has been developed to capture the data of activities happening on ground on a real-time basis by the districts and master volunteers. This App has been placed on the Google Play Store.
- x. Till now, 14 Eminent Universities and colleges like Manipal Institute University, Vellore Collage of Technology, Christ Bangalore, IIT Madras etc. have submitted their detailed action plans to be a part of Abhiyaan. Through their activities, these colleges intend to reach out to around 1.5 lakh people including the active involvement of their students.

The Ministry has been carrying out Preventive education and awareness generation programmes to address specific target groups (vulnerable and at-risk groups) in their neighborhood, educational institutions, workplace, slums etc. with the purpose of sensitizing the target groups and the community about the impact of substance dependence, accept the need for help and accordingly seek professional help for treatment and Whole Person Recovery. So far as the educational awareness programs at School/College level are concerned, this Ministry under the Nasha Mukta Bharat

Abhiyaan (NMBA) has financially assisted six educational institutes during the previous financial year for carrying out educational and awareness campaign.

During the financial year 2020-21, a few organizations running IRCAs, ODICs and CPLIs were discontinued from receiving grant in aid. This action has been taken against those organizations that were found to be non-operational, non-contributing or were not delivering as per guidelines set by the Ministry based on the physical inspection. The process of guiding and strengthening the functioning of those organizations which were lacking in some aspects of their delivery has been initiated by the Ministry to ensure that they optimally provide their services to those in need and help in the fight against substance abuse in the country.

During the current financial year 2021-22, the Ministry has proposed to open only District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC). For setting up of DDACs, preference would be given to those Districts, which do not have any facility of IRCA, CPLI, or ODIC. For this, the organization /start-up willing to work in the field of drugs will be eligible for applying for DDAC. These DDACs would provide comprehensive facilities hitherto being provided by IRCA, ODIC & CPLI together. The functioning of DDAC will be monitored by the Committee headed by the District Magistrate, which has been formed under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA). Additionally, retired eminent personalities of the Districts, activists, Vice- Chancellor/ Head of Department (HoD)/Principal, Researcher, Scholars and so on may be co-opted by Chairman as the members of the Committee. This committee would only monitor policy related issues. Day to day and other activities relating to implementation would be the responsibility of the concerned organization/NGO approved for setting up of the DDAC.

## CHAPTER-III

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

#### (Recommendation, Para No.2.10)

3.1 The Committee observe that while the budgetary allocations available to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2018-19 and 2019- 20 were largely utilized on various Schemes/programmes run by them, the Department could not utilize their budgetary allocation of ₹ 8207.56 crore fully in 2020-21 due to the monthly expenditure ceiling of 5% till September, 2020 as well as other operational restrictions in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic. The Committee note the assurance given by the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to spend the remaining allocation of 2020-21 by 31st March, 2021 and desire to be apprised of the amount finally utilized. Since the socially, educationally and economically marginalized sections of the society are still way behind despite availability of several welfare Schemes for decades, the Committee strongly feel that the Department needs to continue their efforts to effectively execute their Schemes/Programmes with requisite dedication. The fact that budgetary allocation made for the Department for 2021-22 is again less, i.e. ₹ 10,517.62 crore against the projected requirement of ₹ 13257.05 crore, the task for the Department ahead would remain as challenging as ever. The Committee are of the opinion that budgetary requirement projected by the Department for 2021-22 should have been positively considered by the Ministry of Finance, particularly in view of the proven fact that COVID-19 pandemic has the biggest negative impact on life and livelihoods of the deprived sections of the society. As the review of all Government sector Schemes for next five years is being undertaken, the Committee desire that after getting the approval of SFC/EFC for continuation of various Schemes of the Department from 2021-22 to 2025-26, the Department should prepare adequate ground to justify their demand for more funds at RE Stage in 2021-22. The Committee also feels that an online monitoring mechanism for various Schemes/ programmes should have been in place a long time ago because given the educational and other inadequacies among deprived classes, it is easier for Unscrupulous elements to siphon off funds meant for their welfare. The Department must, therefore, ensure that the monitoring mechanism, being the heart and soul of any Scheme, should be implemented by the Department effectively so that any flaw/inconsistency in the implementation of any Scheme is identified immediately and rectified thus ensuring that the benefits of various Schemes reach to the target groups in a faster and transparent manner.

#### Reply of the Government

3.2 Against the total allocation of Rs 8207.56 crore at RE stage, the expenditure of the Department is Rs. 8182.20 crore during the year 2020-21 which is 99.69%. In spite of Covid-19 Pandemic, the Department utilized the full allocation of funds. Department's Budget allotted Revised Budget and Expenditure during the FY 2020-21 is as follows:

(Figure in crore)

Budget 2020-21	Revised Budget 2020-21	Budget	Expenditure 2020-21	% of Expenditure with reference to RE 2020-21
10103.57	8207.56		8182.33	99.69

In addition to the above expenditure, Rs. 54.38 crore was also released from Sr. Citizens Welfare Fund and accordingly, the Gross Expenditure is Rs. 8236.71 crore. The Budget in detail for FY 2020-21 is annexed in annexure-I.

With regard to online monitoring mechanism, the existing scheme of Information and Mass Media has been restructured into Information, Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit (I-MESA) to bring in aspects of monitoring, evaluation and Social Audit of all schemes. Institution which gets grant and schemes funded by the Govt. will be inspected at the field level by Project Monitoring Units. Apart from this, there would be a Central Smart Surveillance System (CSSS) for monitoring the functioning of these institutions. Further, the provisions of social audits of schemes have also been made for stakeholder evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme delivery, thereby providing feedback for improving the service delivery. Also, DBT/PFMS payment mode is adopted for release of funds under the beneficiary oriented schemes of the Department to ensure complete tracking of funds up to “last mile”.

**(Recommendation, Para No.6.14)**

**3.3 The Committee are sad to find from the Survey Report of NITI Aayog about the existence of Manual Scavengers in 194 Districts of 18 States and only 49 Districts being Manual Scavenging free. The Committee are of the view that efforts made by the Department would fail to get the desired results unless sincere efforts are put in by all the executing agencies as Manual Scavenging still exists in 194 Districts of the Country. Skill Development Training needs to be enhanced to cover more persons and other measures of financial assistance needs to be popularized so that these people have vocational options for themselves. The Committee further, are very disturbed to find that 336 deaths have been reported of persons while cleaning sewer and septic tanks during the last five years, out of which in only 221 cases compensation has been provided. In this connection, the Committee note that awareness generation programmes have been conducted by the Department for 470 Municipalities to create awareness about the various provisions of the MS Act, 2013. The Committee also note that the Department have prepared a National Action Plan in consultation with concerned Ministries like the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation wherein a Responsible Sanitation Authority in every district as well as a Sanitation Response Unit equipped with machinery and trained persons to meet the emergencies, has been envisaged. The Committee desire that since mostly manual labour is employed by the contractors to clean septic tanks and the contractors are hired by the Municipal bodies, it is**

**extremely important that the said Sanitation Response Unit or responsible Sanitation Authority is set up in the Municipalities instead of being any stand alone Units. It is further significant that the availability of machines for cleaning sewers and septic tanks are procured by all Municipalities well in time and the cleaning personnel are provided training to operate these machines urgently for regular deployment as well as for attending to emergencies during Monsoon season natural calamities. As the Ministry has also proposed to amend the MS Act, 2013, the Committee urged the Ministry to explore the responsibility of prescribing strict penal action therein on the contractors due to whose actions deaths of cleaning personnel occur in sewers and septic tanks. The committee desire to have a note on the progress made in this direction at the action taken stage.**

### **Reply of the Government**

3.4 Social Welfare Organisations represented to the Niti Aayog and the Ministry that many manual scavengers who were engaged in manual scavenging had been left from identification. Accordingly, National Survey of manual scavengers was carried out during 2018-20 by the respective States in 194 districts of 18 States. Most of the manual scavengers identified during the survey are those who were engaged in manual scavenging at some point of time and are not presently engaged in manual scavenging. So the inference that manual scavenging exists in 194 districts of the country is incorrect. A study conducted during 2020 through independent research organisation also observed that manual scavengers identified and provided the benefit of One Time Cash Assistance are no more engaged in manual scavenging.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is giving more emphasis on skill development of the manual scavengers. Accordingly, during 2020-21, 6204 manual scavengers and their dependents have been covered under Skill Development Training programmes. During 2021-22 also it is planned to provide skill development training to 3,000 manual scavengers.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is very proactive on the matter of deaths of persons while cleaning sewers and septic tanks. As soon as report of any such death comes to the notice of the Ministry, the matter is immediately taken up with the concerned authorities for taking legal action against the offenders and payment of full compensation to the family of victim.

Out of 336 death cases in last five years, full compensation has been paid to 221 families and 47 other families have been paid less than Rs. 10.00 lakh. The matter is being constantly followed up with the concerned authorities for payment of full compensation. Awareness generation programmes have been conducted by the Department in 787 Municipalities to create awareness about the various provisions of the MS Act, 2013. As per the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem, Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA), a new institution shall be constituted in each district, which shall be headed by the District Magistrate or any other appropriate authority.

RSA shall cause setting up of a Sanitation Response Unit (SRU) in the headquarter of ULBs of the district with a mandate to service the entire district-both Rural and Urban areas.

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is in the process of issuing advisory to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for constitution of Responsible Sanitation Authority and setting up of Sanitation Response Units in the districts and municipalities.

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has made the following arrangements for procurement of machines for cleaning sewers and septic tanks and for training of personnel to operate these machines:-

- (i) Under Swachhta Udyami Yojana of National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) concessional loan upto Rs. 50.00 lakh is provided for procurement of machines/vehicles for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks, to:
  - a. Sanitation Workers/Manual Scavengers and their dependants; and
  - b. Urban Local Bodies, Gram Panchayats and other authorities responsible for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- (ii) During 2019-20 and 2020-21, the concessional loan has been provided to 29 ULB etc. for procurement of 296 machines/vehicles.
- (iii) The quantum of capital subsidy for manual scavengers/sanitation workers engaged in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks has been increased to Rs. 5.00 lakh from Rs. 3.25 lakh.
- (iv) NSKFDC is organising Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training programmes for sanitation workers under which they are also given exposure to mechanised cleaning. During 2020-21, RPL training has been provided to 10,486 sanitation workers.
- (v) During 2020-21, 2944 safaimitras, who were engaged in desludging operations in 64 municipalities, have been provided training in mechanised cleaning.

As per Section 9 of the MS Act, 2013, there is already a provision of very severe penalty of fine upto Rs. 5.00 lakh or imprisonment upto five years, or both for violation of provisions of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is following up each case of death while cleaning sewer/septic tank, with the concerned authorities for legal action against the offenders as per provisions of the MS Act, 2013 and under IPC.

## CHAPTER-IV

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION

(Recommendation, Para 3.15)

4.1 The 60 year old Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste students guarantees financial Assistance to fulfill the aspirations of those Scheduled Caste Students whose parent income does not exceed Rs. 2.5 Lakh annually. The Committee note that only 113.15 Lakh students have benefited during the last two years i.e., 2018- 19 and 2019-20 upto 31st December, 2020 with an expenditure of Rs. 8639.47 crore under this Scheme. The Committee feel that the number of beneficiaries should be much more i.e., around 80 Lakh per year to realize the number of 4 crore students, projected to be benefitted in the next 5 years. In the light of the decision that States have to give their share of 40 percent of scholarships amount first and then the 60 per cent share of the Centre will be released to the students, the Committee were informed by the representatives of Ministry that States' liability has now been reduced and hence it is a welcome move. Nonetheless, all State Governments are not very efficient in giving their share on time, hence the Committee feels that an appropriate system may be developed so that the students are not deprived of Scholarship in the absence or delay in providing share by the States. The Committee, therefore, recommend that adequate awareness may be created amongst students so that maximum number of students are able to take the benefit of the Scheme particularly in view of the target fixed next five years. The Committee also recommend that since the suggestions made in the recently conducted Evaluation study of the Scheme are practical and worthy of consideration, hence those may be examined and implemented. The Committee also appreciate the concept of issuing FreeShip Card, after verification of eligibility of the candidates under the Scheme, as this will prove to be very beneficial for the students to take admission in the institution of their choice anywhere in the country without paying any fee. The Committee desire that the Department should direct all the States/UTs to issue FreeShip Card to all eligible students who have applied under the Scheme.

## **Reply of the Government**

4.2 During 2018-19 and 2019-20, the scheme was based on the concept of committed liability of the States, wherein the States/UTs reported difficulties in making budget provision as per their committed liability. As a result of this the coverage of the students under the scheme was comparatively low. The revised scheme envisages covering over 63 lakhs beneficiaries for the financial year 2021-22. With the changes made in the approach of the revised scheme, it is expected that the coverage of beneficiaries shall rise continuously in the upcoming years which will enable realization of the objective of the scheme to cover nearly 4 crore students under the scheme by 2025-26.

In order to ensure that the students are not deprived of Scholarship in the absence or delay in providing share by the States, the concept of Freeship Card has been introduced in the Scheme guidelines. All eligible students shall be entitled to take admission in the institutions without payment of tuition fees and hostel fees as per Scheme guidelines. This Freeship card shall make the student eligible to study in the institution without pre-payment of the fees, on the condition that as and when amount is released to the student's account, the institution would be intimated to collect the same from the student. To enable this, a FREESHIP CARD will be issued by the State Government to the eligible students, as per procedure detailed in the scheme guidelines.

In order to create awareness amongst students so that maximum number of students are able to take the benefit of the Scheme, awareness drives shall be undertaken by the State Governments/UTs about the scheme through the Gram Panchayats Notice Boards, school committees, and discussions in the parent-teacher association meetings and other public awareness measures, in order to extend its coverage and also minimize any misuse by unscrupulous elements.

Detailed scheme guidelines incorporating all such features have been issued and regular follow up is being done at different levels in order to ensure its implementation.



## CHAPTER-V

### Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature.

#### (Recommendation, Para 3.16)

**5.1 The Committee are quite disturbed by cases reported about the alleged misappropriation of funds under scholarship schemes for underprivileged sections in some States, which is stated currently under enquiry. While the Ministry representatives have been claiming that the system is fail-safe due to all transactions/verifications done online, a dedicated Portal, DBT and similar measures, which are definitely the need of the hour, it is disconcerting for the Committee to observe that such instances, however minuscule, would dent the confidence of students on Government Scholarship Schemes. While the Committee desire the Ministry to further plug all identified loopholes in the system, strengthening privacy of data and passwords and reduce all manual interventions, be it school personnel, banking intermediaries, NGOs, or unauthorized persons, they are of the strong opinion that the Department should counsel the State Governments to try to reach out to a sample size of beneficiary students directly to ascertain that they are not being duped in the pretext of Government scholarships, and that they are actually in receipt of the full amount of the entitled scholarship money for the term, as approved against their names in the Portal. The Committee are convinced that a minor's opinion can also lead to a major change at times and hence recommend that action should be taken on this aspect.**

#### Reply of the Government

5.2 As regard to Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students, there have been cases of mis-appropriation of funds reported under the Post Matric SC Scholarship Scheme in a few states. However, the States are undergoing inquiries for the same and it is expected that reports with conclusive evidences shall be provided by the inquiry agency for necessary actions. Now, in the revised PMS-SC Scheme, a complete transformatory approach is envisaged.

The Scheme shall be run on an online platform with robust cyber security measures that would assure transparency, accountability, efficiency, and timely delivery of the assistance without any delays. The National Scholarship Portal (NSP) would be suitably modified for this purpose. Apart from this, the States shall maintain a complete database of the beneficiaries under various other scholarship Schemes to ensure de- duplication of the beneficiaries. The States shall undertake fool-proof verification of the eligibility, caste status, Aadhaar identification and bank account details on the online portal. All verification process of the students should be done using the above authenticated databases automatically using the digital process with little or no manual intervention. There should be no system of verification by the institutions or even the district level officers.

The entire scholarship amount - both from the State and Central Government - including the tuition fees, academic allowance and any other admissible allowance will be paid directly into the account of the students ONLY through DBT preferably through an Aadhaar Based Payment System (Aadhaar Payment Bridge) from 2021-22.

These aforementioned steps are expected to guarantee foolproof system from the invitation of applications to the final disbursement of scholarship to students. Further, the Department shall counsel the State Governments to try to reach out to a sample of beneficiary students directly to ascertain that they are not being duped in the pretext of Government scholarships, and that they are actually in receipt of the full amount of the entitled scholarship money for the term, as approved against their names in the Portal.

**NEW DELHI;**

**December, 2021**  
**Agrahayana, 1943 (Saka)**

**RAMA DEVI**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Standing Committee on**  
**Social Justice and**  
**Empowerment**

## APPENDIX

### ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TWENTIETH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA) ON 'DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2021-22)' OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

#### (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

	Total	Percentage
Total number of Recommendations	10	
(I) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government : <b>Paragraph Nos.- 2.11, 3.17, 4.9, 4.10, 5.16 and 7.12</b>	6	60.00
(II) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government : <b>Paragraph No.- 2.10 and 6.14</b>	2	20.00
(III) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration: <b>Paragraph No.- 3.15</b>	1	10.00
(IV) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are of interim in nature: <b>Paragraph Nos.- 3.16</b>	1	10.00