

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding new policy towards SC/ST students -laid.

DR. K. GOPAL (NAGAPATTINAM) : SC & ST were notified in Clause 1 of Article 341 of the Constitution.

Deep concern of the framers of the Constitution for the upliftment of the SC and ST got reflected in the elaborate constitutional mechanism.

Former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi in the Sixth Five-Year in 1980-85 ensured their due share of plan benefits for the purpose of empowering educationally and economically backward class.

Central Sector Scholarship for Education for SC &ST Students was framed in pursuance of the Union Budget 2005-06. This Scheme was subsequently revised in January, 2012.

Various scholarships are provided by the Central Government to the students belonging to the SC & ST to ensure the incidence of drop out in different stages is minimized.

Pre- matric Scholarship is Rs. 150/- per month for Day Scholars and Rs. 350/- per month for Hostellers and given for 10 months in a year. Post matric Scholarship is a Centrally sponsored scheme. 100% Central assistance is released to State Governments for expenditure incurred by them as their committed liability. Student beneficiaries get a scholarship between Rs. 230 and Rs. 1200/- per month which is very less in terms of present market price.

The Union Budget 2018-2019 has once again fallen short of the expectations of SC/ST communities, much like last year. Mere Rs 66,619 crore has been allocated which is 2.32 per cent of the budget outlay for SC, as opposed to the Rs. 4,05,407 crore (16.6 per cent) that should have been allocated, according to SCSP guidelines. Similarly, Rs. 39,135 crore, 1.6 per cent of the budget outlay was announced for ST, as opposed to Rs. 2,10,030 crore (8.6 per cent) that should have been allocated under the Tribal Sub Plan.

This comes at a time when Tamil Nadu is yet to receive a pending sum of around Rs. 1,600 crores from the Centre for the post-matriculation scholarship for Dalit and tribal students.

In this connection, it is worth-mentioning that former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister expressed her concern over Centre's policy and wrote several letters to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Central Government's latest policy was announced in April which stated that the committed liability of scholarships towards SC/ST now vests with the State Government. The Central Government

has asked the State Governments to keep their budgetary provision from their end to continue this programme.

In case of post-matric scholarships for SC &ST students, it allows Private Educational Institution to charge tuition fee from students at the time of admission but as per earlier central policy SC/ST students were not supposed to pay fee to the Institution.

The new policy of Union Ministry of Social Justice & empowerment will be an hindrance for the education and economic upliftment of SCs/STs.