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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2024-25)**

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2025-26)**

FIFTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2025/ Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

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(2025-26)**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 17.3.2025

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 17.3.2025



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2025/ Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (2024-25)	(iv)
INTRODUCTION	(vi)
REPORT	
CHAPTER - I	1
CHAPTER – II	5
CHAPTER – III	15
CHAPTER – IV	21
CHAPTER – V	27
CHAPTER – VI	32
CHAPTER – VII	41
CHAPTER-VIII	55
ANNEXURE	
I	66
II	69
APPENDIX	71

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2024-25)**

SHRI P.C. MOHAN - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri E. T. Mohammed Basheer
3. Shri Bhaskar Murlidhar Bhagare
4. Smt. Vijayalakshmi Devi
5. Shri Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar
6. Km.Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi
7. Shri Ramesh Chandappa Jigajinagi
8. Shri Chintamani Maharaj
9. Shri Murari Lal Meena
10. Smt. Bag Mitali
11. Shri Bhojraj Nag
12. Shri Godam Nagesh
13. Shri Gajendra Singh Patel
14. Shri Rajkumar Roat
15. Shri Matheswaran V. S.
16. Adv. Priya Saroj
17. Shri Sasikanth Senthil
18. Shri Anoop Pradhan Valmiki
19. Shri Mansukhbhai Dhanjibhai Vasava
20. Dr. Lata Wankhede
21. Shri Surendra Prasad Yadav

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
23. Smt. Geeta alias Chandraprabha
24. Shri Narayana Koragappa
25. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam
26. Shri Ramji
27. Shri Rameswar Teli
28. Smt. Mamata Thakur
29. Smt. P. T. Usha
30. Shri Abdul Wahab
31. Shri Niranjana Bishi

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Mamta Kemwal - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Krishendra Kumar - Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Fifth Report on 'Demands for Grants for the year 2025-26' pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

2. The Committee considered the 'Demands for Grants (2025-26)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) which were laid on the Table of the House on 11 February, 2025. After obtaining the Budget Documents, Explanatory Notes, etc., the Committee took evidence of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) on 21 February, 2025. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at the sitting held on 12.03.2025.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) for tendering oral evidence and placing before them the detailed written notes and post evidence information as desired by the Committee in connection with the examination of the 'Demands for Grants (2025-26)'.

4. For ease of reference observations/ recommendations/ comments of the Committee have been printed in bold in the body of the Report.

New Delhi
12 March, 2025
21 Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

SHRI P.C MOHAN
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Social Justice
and Empowerment

REPORT

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTORY

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment envisages to empower the socially, educationally and economically marginalized sections of the society including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs), Economically Weaker Sections, Senior Citizens, Persons engaged in act of begging, Transgenders, Victims of Alcoholism and Substance abuse. The vision of the Department is to build an inclusive society wherein members of the target groups can lead productive, safe and dignified lives with adequate support for their growth and development.

1.2 The Programmes and Schemes of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment are categorized into Central Sector Schemes and the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes are as follows:-

CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEMES

I. SCHEDULED CASTES WELFARE SCHEMES

1. Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs.
 - a. National Fellowship for SCs
 - b. National Overseas Scholarship for SCs
 - c. Top Class Education for SCs
 - d. Free Coaching for SCs
2. Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESHTA).
3. National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)
4. Venture Capital Funds (VCF) for SCs
5. Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi Yojana for SCs (PM-DAKSH)

II. SOCIAL DEFENCE SCHEMES

1. Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE)

2. Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging
3. Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons

III. OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES WELFARE SCHEMES

1. Venture Capital Fund (VCF) for Backward Classes
2. PM DAKSH Yojana for OBCs
3. Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for OBCs and EBCs
- 3(a) National Fellowship for OBCs
- 3(b) Interest Subsidy on Overseas Studies of OBCs
4. Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT/NT/SNTs (SEED)
5. PM-Young Achiever's Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBCs & Others (PM-YASASVI)

IV. OTHERS

1. Information, Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit

CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES

I. SCHEDULED CASTES WELFARE SCHEMES

1. Post Matric Scholarship for SCs **
2. Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM AJAY) *
3. Strengthening of machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 **
4. Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others **

II. SOCIAL DEFENCE SCHEMES

1. Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)**
2. National Action Plan on Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) *

III. OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES WELFARE SCHEMES

1. PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs *
2. Post Matric Scholarship for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs

3. Pre Matric Scholarship for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs

4. Boys and Girls Hostel for OBCs

5. Top Class Schools

6. Top Class Colleges

* These schemes are 100% Supported by Central Government

** These Schemes are funded on sharing basis with States and Union Territories.

1.3 The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment also supports the following autonomous Corporations:-

(i) National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC);

(ii) National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC);
and

(iii) National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)

1.4 The Committee examines Demands for Grants of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment every year. During the examination of Demands for Grants for 2024-25, the Committee examined the following Schemes of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment:

(i) Budgetary Allocation

(ii) Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes

(iii) Scholarship for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS)
for SCs

(iv) Pradhan Mantri Aanshu Chit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY)

(v) Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Rights Act
1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989

(vi) Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted
Area (SRESHTA) for SC

(vii) Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs and others

(viii) National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

(ix) Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) for
SCs, OBC and others

(x) Social Defence

1.5 On scrutiny of Demands for Grants of the year 2025-26, the Ministry of Finance have allocated ₹14,164.42 crore (including an additional amount of ₹553.42 crore) against the projected requirement of ₹13,041.36 crore. The Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and the Actual Expenditure of the Department for the last three years along with the percentage variation over the preceding years are as under:

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	%age variation	Revised Estimates	%age Variation	Expenditure	%age Variation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2022-23	11922.51	(+) 13.36	11659.94	(+)14.53	7420.75	(-) 0.52
2023-24	12847.02	(+) 7.75	9853.32	(-) 15.49	9510.93	(+) 28.16
2024-25	13000.20	(+) 1.19	10026.40	(+) 1.75	4551.65 #	#
2025-26	13611.00*	(+4.69)	-	-	-	-

Expenditure as on 15.01.2025. The Department is expected to utilize the funds allocated at RE Stage.

* Ministry of Finance has also allocated an additional amount of ₹553.42 crore under Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) which will be met from Senior Citizen Welfare Fund (SCWF). These funds are in addition to Regular Budget allocated to this Department.

1.6 During the examination of Demands for Grants for 2025-26 of the Department, the Committee exhaustively examined all the Schemes / Programmes of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment. However, the Committee decided to draw the attention of Department of Social Justice & Empowerment on the welfare schemes meant for educational and economic upliftment of the deprived sections of the society in this Report. These Schemes have been dealt in the succeeding chapters of this Report.

CHAPTER-II

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

The Demand for Grants of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2025-26 are given under Demand No. 93. The detailed Demand for Grants of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment were laid on the House on 11 February, 2025.

2.2 The Ministry of Finance have allocated ₹14,164.42 crore for the year 2025-26 against the projected requirement of ₹13,041.36 crore made by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment. The details of the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and the Actual Expenditure of the Department of each Schemes/ Programmes for the last three years alongwith the Budget Estimates for each Programme/ Scheme of the Department for 2025-26 is as follows:-

(₹. in crore)											
S.N o.	Programme/Schemes	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			BE 2025-26
		BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure (Till 31.03.2024)	BE	RE	Actual Expendi- ture (Till 15.01.20 25)	
Schemes											
	SCD Division										
1	Post Matric Scholarship for SCs	5660.00	5660.00	4392.50	6359.14	5400.00	5476.22	6359.98	5500.00	2493.57	6360.00
2	Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM AJAY)	1950.00	1062.39	164.00	2050.00	450.00	471.12	2140.00	800.00	401.55	2140.00
3	Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others	500.00	500.00	208.62	500.00	430.00	446.64	500.00	450.00	165.11	577.96
4	Development Action plan for SCs (DAPSC)		950.00	236.99							
5	Strengthening of machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989	600.00	500.00	390.85	500.00	500.00	535.18	550.00	500.00	435.91	463.00
6	Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers	70.00	70.00	11.10							
7	National Action Plan For Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)				97.41	30.06	30.06	116.94	50.00	29.52	130.00
8	Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESHTA) for SCs (Earlier Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for SCs)	89.00	89.00	51.01	104.65	90.00	81.59	133.07	110.00	80.85	140.00

9	Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs	364.00	344.00	293.77	371.00	387.82	363.31	428.00	428.00	239.32	472.00
10	Vanchit Ikai Samooch aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana (Allocation for SCs)	50.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	6.01	11.49	1.50	24.57
11	Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs (Allocation for SCs)	70.00	70.00	35.00	70.00	22.00	22.00	10.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
12	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) Yojana (Allocation for SCs)	40.00	40.00	8.90	43.73	60.00	32.74	65.00	40.00	0.00	70.00
	Total SCD Division	9393.01	9285.40	5555.75	10095.94	7369.89	7458.85	10309.00	7889.50	3847.33	10377.54
	Social Defence, Media and Research										
13	Information, Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit	19.50	19.50	13.74	20.00	25.00	22.33	10.00	10.00	3.55	6.11
14	Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)	150.00	140.00	117.54	294.97	140.00	141.42				
	AVYAY-CSS							260.00	145.00	39.04	263.73
	AVYAY-CSS (Support From SCWF)							-260.00	-145.00	-39.04	-263.73
	AVYAY-CS							279.44	268.77	123.10	289.69
	AVYAY-CS (Support From SCWF)							-279.44	-268.77	-123.10	-289.69
15	National Action Plan on Drug Demand Reduction	200.00	200.00	97.61	311.00	175.00	173.04	314.00	240.00	81.89	333.00
16	Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE)										
	Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars	15.00	15.00	0.44	20.00	10.00	5.26	30.00	15.00	8.01	30.00
	Scheme for Transgender Persons	30.00	30.00	0.12	52.91	22.82	6.59	68.46	45.00	0.21	76.87
	Total: Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE)	45.00	45.00	0.56	72.91	32.82	11.85	98.46	60.00	8.22	106.87
	Total Social Defence	395.00	385.00	215.71	678.88	347.82	326.31	412.46	300.00	90.11	445.98
	Backward Classes Division										
17	PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs	1581.00	1581.00	1388.82	1588.00	1603.00	1316.65	1836.00	1380.63	383.12	2190.00
18	Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for OBCs and EBCs	80.00	80.00	75.37	86.00	150.00	145.85	80.00	80.00	61.54	250.13
19	Vanchit Ikai Samooch aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana (Allocation for OBCs)	30.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	4.01	11.95	1.00	25.70
20	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) Yojana (Allocation for OBCs)	44.00	44.00	6.04	48.74	60.00	25.60	65.00	40.00	0.00	60.00
21	Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT/NT/SNTs (SEED)	28.00	28.00	2.30	40.40	15.00	15.00	39.40	39.40	10.59	39.40
22	Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs (Allocation for OBCs)	40.00	40.00	10.00	22.00	10.00	10.00	40.00	30.00	29.51	0.01
	Total Backward Classes Division	1803.00	1773.01	1482.53	1785.15	1838.01	1513.11	2064.41	1581.98	485.76	2565.24
	Grand Total of all schemes of the Department	11610.51	11462.91	7267.73	12579.97	9580.72	9320.59	12795.87	9781.48	4426.75	13388.76
Non Schemes											
	Establishment										
1	Secretariat of Department of SJE	66.00	66.00	60.15	72.00	78.45	71.96	67.00	76.25	55.87	70.21
2	National Commission for Scheduled Castes	30.00	30.00	21.81	35.00	35.12	25.32	38.00	70.79	21.72	41.00

3	National Commission for Safai Karamcharis	11.00	11.00	3.08	12.00	10.98	5.20	12.75	12.80	4.26	14.00
4	National Commission for Backward Classes	15.00	15.00	3.67	20.00	20.00	6.47	21.00	20.21	5.60	22.00
5	Commission under Commissions of inquiry Act, 1952 to examine the matter of according Scheduled Caste status to new persons, who claim to historically have belonged to Scheduled Castes but have converted to religion other than those mentioned in the presidential Orders issued from time to time under Article 341 of the constitution of India.				3.05	3.05	0.46	2.05	2.34	0.21	4.50
	Total Establishment	127.00	127.00	91.03	147.05	152.60	110.35	145.80	186.39	88.48	151.71
	Others										
6	Other Miscellaneous Expenditure		10.00	8.09	10.00	10.00	8.39	8.50	8.50	6.52	8.50
	Autonomous Bodies/Grantee Bodies										
7	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Foundation	10.00	10.00	10.00	40.00	40.00	17.50	30.00	30.00	20.00	35.00
8	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre	30.00	30.00	30.00							
9	National Institute of Social Defence	20.00	20.00	13.90	30.00	30.00	14.09	20.00	20.00	9.90	22.00
10	Development and Welfare Board for DNTs	5.00	5.00	2.32	5.00	5.00	0.95	5.00	4.00	0.82	5.00
	Total Autonomous Bodies	60.00	60.00	53.90	70.00	70.00	31.59	50.00	50.00	29.90	62.00
	Equity Support										
11	National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation	50.00	0.01	0.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
12	National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation	25.00	0.01	0.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
13	National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation	50.00	0.01	0.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
	Total Equity Support	125.00	0.03	0.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.03
	Total Non Schemes	312.00	197.03	153.02	267.05	272.60	190.33	204.33	244.92	124.90	222.24
	Grand Total Schemes + Non Schemes	11922.51	11659.94	7420.75	12847.02	9853.32	9510.93	13000.20	10026.40	4551.65	13611.00

2.3 On being enquired about the reasons due to which the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment are not able to spend the Revised Estimates during the past years, the Committee were informed by the representatives of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment during the deliberation that:-

“We have improved our expenditures in 2023-24, when we compare it to 2021-22, and 2022-23. And this year, the position is likely to go up in the last quarter. As of now, we are at around 39 per cent. Although this is the last quarter, but because of the nature of our schemes, about 72 per cent of our budget goes into scholarship schemes. So that is a very large chunk, where most of the proposals come in the last quarter because the portals in the States open around December or January, the States keep extending the deadlines of keeping the portals open, as a result of which, we keep getting the proposals in the months of February and March. So, a large chunk of our expenditure happens in this last quarter. So, we have a large number of proposals under consideration, and the figure which we see here is likely to go up substantially. We are confident of at least reaching the RE figure.”

2.4 In this context, elaborating further, the Secretary of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted before the Committee during the deliberation that:-

“There are Centrally-Sponsored Schemes. In the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme, the State contribution exists and the other thing is that for schemes other than the scholarship, in most of the schemes we have a State Action Plan. Under the State Action Plan, the States have to submit their Action Plan. Once they submit their Action Plan, then only we do it. We continuously work with the States on early submissions. The second issue related to this is that the fund release is dependent on whatever were the funds released earlier, and whether those have been utilized under the individual components of the scheme. Right now, we have a SNA balance across schemes of more than Rs. 3,000 crore lying with the States. The change was done because otherwise it would lead to parking of funds. So, the Government of India decided that we will release funds only after the utilization for that scheme is given. So, right now, we have roughly around Rs. 3,000 odd crore lying with the States. Therefore, even if we have the funds, I will say that the funds are not an issue. Actually, we are not able to release those funds till they spend it.”

2.5 On being asked whether the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment will be able to spend the remaining budgetary allocation of 2024-25 and the steps taken to spend budgetary allocation of 2025-26, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment *inter-alia* submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is actively working to utilize the remaining budget for the current financial year. Department is working on mission mode and is urging States to submit proposals on time and to submit utilisation certificates of past releases. The Department closely monitors position of unspent balances of States. To ensure efficient use of funds, regional conferences were held in Hyderabad, Lucknow, and Jaipur with representatives of State governments and Union Territories. Another conference is also scheduled to take place in Bhubaneswar. Additionally, a "Chintan Shivir" was organized by HMJSE in Agra with the Social Welfare Ministers of various states and government representatives to raise awareness about the schemes of the Department and to sensitise States about the need to monitor unspent balances in their SNA accounts.

Since all schemes are demand-driven, Department is taking proactive measures to ensure that the allocated budget for 2025-26 is fully utilized.

As of now, 35 States/UTs have implemented SNA mechanism. So, the release of funds to States/UTs will be mobilized more efficiently.”

2.6 With regard to the action plan for the expenditure of funds allocated for 2025-26, the Committee were informed by the representatives of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment during the deliberation that :-

“88 per cent of our schemes are Centrally sponsored schemes, which means that we contribute a part of the funds from the Central Government, and States also pull in their share. This means that we are largely dependent on States to submit proposals and to implement our schemes. Here is the major challenge of the Department”.

2.7 The Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment further added that:

“Last year we spent ₹9,500 crore. We will be spending more than ₹9,500 crore. We will exceed that in this year, and this statement should be taken on record that we will be spending more than that as per the allocations. We are making all the efforts to increase as per the budgetary allocation and my team of officers are working hard. We are monitoring it on a daily basis despite all the limitations.”

2.8 On being enquired about the Schemes on which the Department of Expenditure has allocated more funds than proposed by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment alongwith factors taken into consideration while preparing the Budgetary Proposals and also while allocation of funds against the proposal by Department of Expenditure, the Department submitted as under:

“The following schemes are those where the Department of Expenditure has allocated a higher amount of funds than what was proposed by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.

<i>(₹. in crore)</i>			
Sr. No.	Programme/Schemes	BE 2025-26 proposed by the Department	BE 2025-26 provided by MoF
Schemes			
1.	Post Matric Scholarship for SCs	5900.00	6360.00
2.	PM AJAY	2040.00	2140.00
3.	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH –SC)	60.00	70.00
4.	AVYAY- CSS	143.73	263.73

When preparing the Budgetary Proposals, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment considers several key factors. These include past spending patterns under the scheme, the capacity of States to absorb additional funds, number of proposals received from States, pendency of utilisation certificates, feasibility of the proposals for ensuring that they are achievable and are aligned with the intended objectives of the schemes. The budgetary proposals must align with the larger national goals and priorities, particularly those related to social justice, inclusive growth, poverty alleviation, and welfare of disadvantaged groups. The Ministry of Finance, Department of

Expenditure, also takes into account the same factors, along with the department's past performance, when allocating funds.”

2.9 When asked about the system evolved to ensure that the funds allocated for the Scheme do not remain idle and are able to yield the desired results and the steps taken to ensure that the targeted section of the society do not suffer for the lapses of the States/UT Governments, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“The Department, in mission mode, is actively working to sensitize states on the need for timely submission of proposals for facilitating prompt release of funds. This is being done through regular follow-ups at the highest levels, including review meetings chaired by the Hon’ble Minister, such as the one held in Agra.

As a result of these persistent efforts and constant persuasion, the Uttar Pradesh government has returned ₹272.00 crore from the SNA balance after the Agra meeting. Additionally, the overall unspent SNA balance has decreased significantly from ₹5,055.93 crore as on 01.04.2024 to ₹2,779.32 crore on 12.02.2025 due to these efforts. Furthermore, these sustained efforts have led to a significant increase in expenditure, which surged to ₹5,000.24 crore in the fourth quarter (as on 01.02.2025), as compared to ₹699.85 crore in the first quarter of FY 2024-25.

This Department constantly pursuing with State/UT Governments to publicize the schemes and motivate SC students to participate in the various schemes of the Department. Further, the State/UT Governments are also requested to issue necessary directions to the concerned officers to facilitate issuance of SC certificates expeditiously. The schemes are being published through website of the Ministry and print media as well.”

2.10 With reference to the State/ UT Governments and NGOs/Organizations/ Institutes that have failed in fulfilling the requisite formalities as a result of which funds could not be released to them and the steps taken to ensure that such instance do not recur and also the Schemes do not suffer due to slackness of the implementing agencies, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:

“A cumulative unspent balance of ₹85.88 crore remains in the SNA accounts of states such as Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Assam under the PM AJAY scheme. Similarly, ₹196.59 crore remains unspent in the SNA accounts of Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh under the PM YASASVI scheme. Additionally, certain NGOs have also failed to comply with the requisite guidelines (59 Organisations *i.e.* Andhra Pradesh (2), Gujarat (1), Karnataka (4), Madhya Pradesh (3), Orissa (7), Jharkhand (1), Uttar Pradesh (8), Rajasthan (6), Manipur (4), West Bengal (5), Tamil Nadu (1) and Punjab (1). Stoppage order against NGO’s in Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and 2 in Rajasthan.

State Action Plan proposals (SAP) for FY 2024-25 have not been received from 4 States/UT Governments i.e. Haryana, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh. Further, though 5 State/UTs (Maharashtra, Ladakh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat) have submitted their State Action Plans, due to non-submission of Utilization Certificates, Physical Progress Report etc. funds could not be released.

However, the Department is actively working to sensitize states on the need for timely submission of proposals and reducing their SNA balances for facilitating prompt release of funds. This is being done through regular follow-ups at the highest levels, including review meetings chaired by the Hon'ble Minister, such as the one held in Agra. As a result of these persistent efforts and constant persuasion, the Uttar Pradesh government has returned ₹ 272.00 crore from the SNA balance after the Agra meeting. Additionally, the unspent SNA balance has decreased significantly from ₹5,055.93 crore. On 01.04.2024 to ₹2,779.32 crore on 12.02.2025 due to these persistent efforts. Furthermore, these sustained efforts have led to a significant increase in expenditure, which surged to ₹5,000.24 crore till 01.02.2025, compared to ₹699.85 crore in the first quarter of FY 2024-25."

2.11 The Committee find that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment spent ₹6,410.09 crore and ₹7,830.26 crore on various Scholarships and other educational schemes in 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively. Similarly, in the year 2024-25, the Department has spent ₹3,403.51 crore on Educational Scholarship Schemes till February, 2025. The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Department in making education accessible to the deprived sections of the Society through various Schemes. The Committee believe that for the success of any educational scheme, other factors are also significant such as cost of education, availability of good Government Schools/Colleges and teaching staff for its effective implementation. The Committee are of the opinion that the annual scholarship granted to a student for pursuing education is not sufficient to meet the present-day expenditure required to get proper and quality education. The Committee would, therefore, like the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment to review the annual scholarship amount granted to each student pursuing various courses alongwith the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to achieve the envisaged objectives of the various scholarship schemes of the Department. The Committee would like to recommend that the quantum of Scholarship granted to a student under each Scheme should be periodically reviewed to contain the inflation so that the Scheme is more fruitful.

2.12 The Committee find that about 72.5 per cent of the Budgetary allocation of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment is utilized on the Scholarships and other Educational Schemes of the Department. Keeping in view huge mandate of the Department to cater the needs of various marginalized sections including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes,

Economically Weaker sections, Senior Citizens, Transgenders, victims of substance abuse through various welfare schemes, the Committee urge that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment should focus on other schemes also. For this purpose, if additional funds are required, they may seek more budgetary allocations. Further, the Committee find that there are frequent changes in the guidelines of various Schemes such as PM-AJAY, SHRESHTA, NAMASTE, PM-VISVAS etc. The Committee are of the view that the guidelines of any Scheme should be properly examined by seeking suggestions from all the stakeholders before they are finalized. In this regard, the Committee expect that the Department will find out the solution by taking into confidence the State Governments and also consider stepping up the budgetary allocation in future so that the Schemes other than educational schemes become meaningful for the targeted sections of the society.

2.13 The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has been able to implement the SNA system for flow of funds across the country. The Committee find that the Department is organizing ‘Chintan Shivir’, meetings with the State Governments and other Implementing Agencies so that the complete proposals and Utilization Certificates are timely submitted to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for timely release of funds. The Department has also been able to persuade some State Governments to return the unspent funds lying with their SNA Accounts. However, there are certain States such as Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, etc. have failed in returning the unspent balance in their SNA Accounts. The Committee are satisfied with the provisions contained in the SNA System and expect that the system will certainly help the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in maximizing the use of funds allocated to the Department. Since some of the State

Governments are yet to surrender the unutilized amount, they may be asked to surrender it immediately so that the next installment is released to them and the marginalized people for whom these Schemes have been framed do not suffer for the failure of the State Government in completing the formalities required from them. The Committee would also like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to consider incentivizing those State Governments that are completing all the formalities in time so that the defaulting States also make sincere efforts to implement the Schemes of the Government of India.

2.14 The Committee are well aware that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is spending large amount of budgetary allocation in Scholarship Schemes. The Committee have found that year after year the scholarship amount released to the eligible students spills over to the next academic year as the applications from State Governments are received up to the months of February and March. The Committee are of the view that current system is required to be reviewed as the students should get scholarship within the same academic year so that the education of the student is not disrupted for want of money. The Committee would like the Department to give all the handholding support to the State Governments to start the process early so that the requisite formalities are completed in time. The Committee expect that the Department should make all out efforts to sensitize the State Governments and Other Implementing Agencies on this aspect and get the issue of last-minute spending resolved.

CHAPTER-III

VANCHIT IKAI SAMOOH AUR VARGON KI ARTHIK SAHAYATA (VISVAS) YOJANA FOR SCs AND OBCs

VISVAS Yojana is an initiative of the Department to support the livelihood activities for the marginalized SC, OBC, and Safai Karamcharis (including manual scavengers and waste-pickers), with a 5 per cent interest subvention on income-generating loans. Individual and SHG loanees (with at least 70 per cent target group members) with standard accounts in PSBs, RRBs, private banks, small finance banks, and similar institutions will be eligible for this benefit. The Scheme through its convergence with MUDRA (Shishu & Kishore), NRLM, PRAYAAS of SIDBI etc. will provide affordable and cost-effective credit option for the members of target group. Interest subvention benefit will be provided for only those loans (or their portion) for which no interest subvention benefit has been provided. Thus, convergence will help in maximizing the benefits without duplication of efforts.

3.2 The Scheme is implemented by the three Corporations under the administrative control of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment namely, National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC), National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC). Eligible beneficiary data is uploaded by Lending Institutions in the PM SURAJ portal, and the subvention amount will be directly transferred to beneficiaries' accounts through PFMS, with SMS notifications sent upon successful transfer.

3.3 The Scheme will be initially implemented for 2024-25 and 2025-26. During 2024-25 and 2025-26 a Budget of ₹251 crore has been earmarked with the aim of benefitting 15 lakh beneficiaries and an offtake of ₹4,200 crore worth of credit. However, the Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure during 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 including Budgetary Estimate for 2025-26 is as follows:-

	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			(₹ in crore) 2025-26
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
Vanchit Ikai SamooH aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana (Allocation for SCs)	50.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	6.01	11.49	1.50	24.57

Vanchit Ikai Samoooh aur Vargon ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana (Allocation for OBC)	30.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	4.01	11.95	1.00	25.70
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3.4 With regard to earmarking of budget of ₹251 crore for 2024-25 and 2025-26, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment informed as under:

“Provision for an outlay of ₹251 crore towards interest subvention amount has been made for the scheme for the period 2024-25 to 2025-26 as per Standing Finance Committee (SFC) recommendations. This provision is likely to benefit approximately 15 lakh beneficiaries. This provision has been made based on the committed liabilities on account of interest subvention spread over the period of loan or until 2029-30, whichever is earlier. While the scheme is being implemented for the period 2024-25 to 2025-26, the beneficiaries onboarded during this period will be eligible for the interest subvention benefit for the tenure of their loan or until 2029-30, whichever is earlier. The specific allocations of ₹24.57 crore for SCs and ₹25.70 crore for OBCs in 2025-26 have been made based on the year-wise projections given in the approved SFC note.”

3.5 On being asked about the existence of any other Scheme similar to VISVAS Scheme prior to the introduction of this Scheme, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“Vanchit Ikai Samoooh aur Vargon ki Aarthik Sahayata (VISVAS) was initially launched on a pilot basis in 2020-21 to support livelihood activities for marginalized SC and OBC populations, with a 5% interest subvention on income-generating loans up to Rs. 2 Lakhs for individuals and Rs. 4 Lakhs for Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The guidelines for the new VISVAS Scheme were issued on 14.06.2024, and the Scheme is being implemented for the period 2024-25 and 2025-26.”

3.6 With reference to the difference between the old and new guidelines of VISVAS Scheme and benefit of new guidelines to beneficiaries, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:

	VISVAS (Pilot Scheme)	New VISVAS Scheme
Duration	2020-21	2024-25, 2025-26
Coverage	Schedule Caste (SC) , Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Schedule Caste (SC) , Other Backward Classes (OBC), SafaiKaramchari (SK) (including identified manual scavengers , waste pickers and their dependents)

Limit of Loan amount	Individual loan :UptoRs 2 lakh SHGs: Rs 4 lakh	Individual loan :UptoRs 5 lakh SHGs: Rs 10 lakh
Income criteria of group/ individual members	All members/individual must have annual family income upto Rs. 3.00 Lakh	In case of OBC and SC-No change No income criteria in case of Safai Karamchari(SK)
Composition of SHGs	100% from SC/OBC	70% from SC/OBC/Safai Karamchari)
Caste Criteria of SHGs members	All members were required to submit caste certificate	Declaration by the President of the SHG only is acceptable
Convergence with other schemes	Not allowed	Convergence allowed within the loan limits only for loans (or their portion) for which no other interest subvention is being claimed. e.g. Shishu& Kishore Loans under MUDRA, NRLM, SIDBI's PRAYAAS, PM-SVANidhi etc.

The new scheme allows more beneficiaries from marginalized groups to be covered for the benefits of interest subvention for ensuring their economic empowerment.”

3.7 As regards the criteria fixed for the selection of beneficiaries under the Scheme including the amount of loan that can be sanctioned to the beneficiary, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:

“The target group beneficiaries under the VISVAS Scheme primarily belong to Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Safai Karamcharis (including identified Manual Scavengers, Waste Pickers, and their dependents). The economic criteria for selection are as follows:

- i. SC and OBC individuals with an annual family income of up to Rs. 3.00 lakh are eligible for the scheme.
- ii. No income criteria apply to Safai Karamcharis (including Manual Scavengers, Waste pickers, and their dependents).

Eligible Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and individuals will receive an interest subvention of up to 5% per annum on the loans provided under the VISVAS Scheme. A maximum loan of Rs 10 lakh for SHGs and Rs 5 lakh for individuals is eligible under the scheme.”

3.8 On being enquired about the role of NSFDC, NBCFDC and NSKFDC in selecting and sanctioning of loan to beneficiaries under the scheme, the Committee were *inter-alia* informed *vide* written reply that:

“The role of NSFDC, NBCFDC, and NSKFDC in this context is to facilitate the identification and sanctioning of loans to beneficiaries from these target groups, ensuring they meet the criteria for financial assistance and enabling access to the benefits provided by the scheme.”

3.9 On being asked about the reasons due to which the proposal for continuation of the Scheme could not be approved during 2022-23 and the reasons for budgetary allocation of ₹50.00 crore was made in 2022-23 when scheme was not operational, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:

“The proposal for the continuation of the Scheme could not be approved during 2022-23 due to delays in completing the required third-party evaluation, which was a prerequisite for its continuation. The evaluation study of the VISVAS (Pilot Scheme) was conducted by NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS), and the report was submitted on 1st February 2022. Additionally, several meetings with stakeholders, including banks, were held to gather suggestions for improvements. Based on the findings of the evaluation study and extensive consultations with stakeholders, the new VISVAS Scheme has been formulated.

A budgetary allocation of ₹ 50.00 crore was made in 2022-23 because the Scheme was initially planned to be launched during that period.”

3.10 As regard to the number of beneficiaries in 2024-25 from SC, OBC and Safai Karamcharis alongwith financial assistance provided to each category, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:

“The financial assistance provided in the year 2024-25 (till current date) is as follows:

- (i) NBCFDC: ₹3.0 crore benefiting 47,809 OBC individuals.
- (ii) NSFDC: ₹4.452 crore, benefiting 44,006 SC individuals.

However, NSKFDC has not provided any financial assistance to any of the Safai Karamchari. In total, the cumulative financial assistance provided amounts to ₹7.452 crore, benefiting 91,815 individuals.”

3.11 When asked the reasons for higher budgetary allocation at RE stage in 2024-25 and for lower budgetary allocation for SCs in 2025-26 in comparison to 2022-23, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“As of now, out of the revised estimate (R.E) of ₹23.44 crore for 2024-25, ₹10 crore has been released. The remaining balance of ₹13.44 crore is currently in process for release. For the year 2025-26, the department had requested a budget allotment of ₹96 crore, including ₹42 crore for SCs (including Safai Karamcharis) and ₹54 crore for BCs in BE 2025-26. However, ₹50.27 Crore has been allocated, with ₹24.57 crore earmarked for SCs and ₹25.7 crore for BCs.”

3.12 As regards to the steps being taken by the Department to make the Scheme successful in 2025-26, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“Extensive consultations with lending institutions have been conducted to familiarize them with the scheme. As a result 57 banks have been onboarded. Standardized promotional materials have also been provided to banks to raise awareness among potential beneficiaries.”

3.13 The Committee note that the Vanchit Ikai Samooh Aur Vargon Ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana for SC and OBCs was launched on a pilot basis in 2020-21 to support livelihood activities for marginalized SC and OBC with a 5 per cent interest subvention on income-generating loans upto ₹ 2 lakhs for individuals and ₹4 lakhs for Self-Help Groups(SHGs). However, the actual expenditure was ‘nil’ in 2022-23 and 2023-24 as the Scheme was not approved for 2022-23. Since the new guidelines for the Scheme were issued on 14.06.2024, the actual expenditure of ₹1.50 crore and ₹1.00 crore could only be made out of allocated funds of ₹11.49 crore and ₹11.95 crore under the VISVAS Scheme for SCs and OBCs, respectively in 2024-25 (till February,2025). The Committee are not able to comprehend the reasons due to which the Scheme could not take off till 2024-25 and the Department took almost two years in finalizing the guidelines even after the third-party

evaluation report was submitted in February, 2022. The Committee are of the opinion that any new Scheme should be launched after exhaustive consultations with all the State Governments, stakeholders, banks and other implementing agencies. The Committee desire that some mechanism should be evolved for the periodic review of Schemes so that the flaws are noticed and the requisite changes are made in the guidelines to plug the loopholes found during the implementation. The Committee would like to be informed of the instructions issued in this regard.

3.14 The Committee find that ₹251 crore has been earmarked with the aim of benefitting 15 lakh beneficiaries during 2024-25 and 2025-26 under the Scheme. The Committee also find from the figures given by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment that financial assistance of only ₹3.00 crore benefitting 47,809 OBC individuals and ₹4.452 crore benefitting 44,006 SC individuals have been provided in 2024-25. The Committee find that even after the issuance of revised guidelines, the Scheme is not attracting targeted beneficiaries. The Committee believe that the target of 15 lakh beneficiary fixed for 2024-25 and 2025-26 is very difficult to be achieved. The Committee, therefore, desire that the reasons due to which Scheme is not picking up should be identified. The initiatives taken by the Department to promote the Scheme may yield desired results if concerted efforts by the Department including NSFDC, NBCFDC, NSKFDC and Banks are made to make the Scheme successful. Since the Scheme is to be initially implemented in 2024-25 and 2025-26, the Committee are concerned about the tenure of the Scheme and desire that the Department should consider extending the tenure of the Scheme as the tenure of two years is too less for any Scheme to be successful.

CHAPTER-IV

VENTURE CAPITAL FUND FOR SCs AND OBCs.

Launched in 2015, Venture Capital Fund seeks to promote entrepreneurship among the scheduled castes. Industrial finance Corporation of India (IFCI) Venture Capital Ltd is the Fund manager for implementing the scheme. The objectives of the Scheme are (a) to provide concessional finance to SC entrepreneurs, who will create wealth and value for society and at the same time, will promote profitable businesses; (b) to increase financial inclusion for SC entrepreneurs and to motivate them for further growth of SC communities; (c) to enhance direct and indirect employment generation for SC population in India. Fund corpus under the scheme is ₹750 crore. Coupon rate is 4% p.a. (3.75% for women/Divyang SC Entrepreneur). Investment period is upto 10 years including moratorium period of upto 36 months. ₹558.09 Crore have been sanctioned to 143 companies (as of December 2024), of which ₹393.87 crore have been disbursed to 115 companies.

Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission (ASIIM)

4.2 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission (ASIIM) on 30th September 2020 under VCF-SC, to promote innovation amongst SC Students/Researchers and those working in Technology Business Incubators (TBIs), Atal Incubation Centers (AIC) etc. Investment Size of up to ₹30 lakh is permitted under the Scheme with coupon rate of 4 % p.a. (3.75% for women/Divyang SC Entrepreneur). Investment Period is up to 10 years including moratorium period of up to 36 months. ₹27.91 crore have been sanctioned (as of December 2024) to 94 Companies, of which ₹ 9.94 crore have been disbursed to 75 companies.

4.3 Venture Capital Fund for Backward Classes (VCF-BC) was initiated on 1.10.2019 as a separate scheme similar to the ongoing scheme of Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC) with the objective of promoting entrepreneurship among the Backward Classes by providing concessional finance to them to enable them to create

wealth and value for society and at the same time promote profitable businesses and employment generation. Fund corpus under the scheme is ₹180.92 crore. Coupon rate is 6 % p.a. (5.75% for women/Divyang SC Entrepreneur). Investment period is upto 10 years including moratorium period of upto 36 months. ₹94.08 Crore have been sanctioned to 18 companies (as of December 2024), of which ₹51.50 crore have been disbursed to 16 companies.

4.4 As per the information provided by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 including Budgetary Estimate for 2025-26 under the Scheme is as follows:-

	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			2025-26
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs (Allocation for SCs)	70.00	70.00	35.00	70.00	22.00	22.00	10.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs (Allocation for OBCs)	40.00	40.00	10.00	22.00	10.00	10.00	40.00	30.00	29.51	0.01

*Physical targets are not specified as the performance of the scheme is primarily measured in terms of financial support provided.

4.5 On being enquired about the number of SC and OBC beneficiaries since inception of Scheme for SC in 2015 and Scheme for OBC in 2019, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment sated in a written reply that:-

“Since the launch of the VCF SC (Incl. ASIIM) Scheme in 2015 and VCF-BC in 2019, ₹571.60 Crore to 234 companies belonging to Schedule Caste entrepreneurs, and ₹112.35 Crore to 22 companies belonging to Backward Classes have been sanctioned respectively.”

4.6 The Committee were informed with regard to the criteria adopted for allocation of funds under the Scheme for SCs and OBCs that the allocation of funds under the Scheme for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) is determined based on the demand made by the Fund Manager, i.e. IFCI Venture Capital Ltd. This demand is calculated based on applications received, sanctions issued, actual disbursements, and the available fund corpus.

4.7 As regards to the budgetary allocation of ₹0.01crore made for SC and OBCs in 2025-26 whereas it was ₹70.00 crore for SCs and ₹40.00 crore for OBCs in 2022-23, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“For the Venture Capital Fund for SCs (VCF-SC), the approved corpus is ₹750 crore, of which Gol's share is ₹675 crore. Gol's share has been released periodically as per the demand received from IFCI Venture Capital Ltd. The last instalment of Gol share i.e., ₹22 crore was released in 2023-24. As a result, a token provision of ₹0.01 crore has been made in the Budget Estimate (BE) for 2025-26, as there is no further Gol instalment due. Similarly, for the Venture Capital Fund for BCs (VCF-BC), with an approved corpus of ₹200 crore and a Gol contribution of ₹180 crore, the last installment of ₹29.5 crore was released in 2024-25 and accordingly a token provision of ₹0.01 crore has been made in the BE 2025-26.

It is also important to note that both VCF-SC and VCF-BC are set to continue until 31.03.2025. A new Venture Capital Fund for Deprived and Marginalized groups is being planned for the future, which is why the allocation for 2025-26 is kept minimal.”

4.8 On being asked about the reasons due to which Venture Capital Fund will be discontinued after 31 March, 2025 and by when the new scheme is likely to be announced and how it would be different from the existing scheme, the Department submitted that:-

“The Venture Capital Fund (VCF) Scheme will be discontinued after 31 March 2025 primarily due to its 10-year lifecycle in alignment with SEBI AIF regulations, and the fund duration of the current scheme. The new scheme will be announced once the EFC approval and subsequent Cabinet approval is obtained. The major changes proposed in the new VCF are summarized below:

	Existing VCF	Proposed VCF
Coverage	Scheduled Caste, Backward Classes	Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes , EWS, transgender , disabled etc
Components	Venture capital funding , incubation support	Capacity building incubation support , accelerator funding
Type of Fund model	Single Fund	Fund of Fund
Nature of Fund	Primarily a debt fund	Envisaged to be an equity fund
Corpus	₹ 750 crore for VCF-SC ₹ 200 crore for VCF-BC	₹2500 crore by Gol and additional ₹1500 crore to be raised by AIFs (daughter funds)

4.9 On being enquired about the reasons due to which funds allocated to SCs and OBCs in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 could not be spent during these years, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“Budgetary allocations are made according to the applications in pipeline and sanctions issued. Shortfall in fund utilization during 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 were due to delays in actual disbursements, as the disbursements are made in instalments on meeting specific conditions as per sanction issued.”

4.10 On being enquired about the steps being taken to achieve the objective of the Schemes in the absence of budgetary allocation for 2025-26, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment responded *vide* written reply that:-

“Since the duration of the existing fund is till 31.3.2025, the department is in the process of formulating a new Venture Capital Fund for deprived and Marginalized sections with enhanced corpus and increased coverage of the Scheme.

The proposed new scheme will focus on capacity building and outreach. A portion of management/administration fee will be utilized by Fund Manager/ Daughter Funds for promotion of the scheme.”

4.11 In respect of the nature of the companies that has been sanctioned loans of under VCF-SC and VCF-OBC upto December, 2024 alongwith the reasons due to which the loan sanctioned could not be totally disbursed, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“The VCF-SC and VCF-BC schemes primarily support first-generation entrepreneurs, with most of them being greenfield projects and few focused on expansion. The sector-agnostic nature of the schemes has led to projects in sectors such as agriculture, FMCG, food processing, healthcare, power, and textiles. Fund disbursements follow project implementation schedules (18–24 months) and are contingent upon promoter contributions and obtaining necessary approvals, such as land use and pollution control clearances. The average timeline from application to sanction is 3–4 months, with disbursements varying based on the completion of required formalities.

4.12 On being asked about the survey conducted to identify the reasons for slow progress of the Scheme to make it more effective, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“No survey has been conducted. However, there was an evaluation study done by IIPA for VCF-SC from 2015-2019 and the report was published in March, 2020. The report highlighted that the venture capital fund for SC (VCF-SC) is a distinct scheme and needs continuation. The study suggested that the delays in securing clearances as a concern, which could be mitigated by implementing a single-window system for approvals and better post-loan support. In addition, the study focused on the need for better information dissemination about the scheme, streamlining disbursement process, effective grievance redressal mechanism, etc. for improving the scheme.”

4.13 On being enquired about the purpose to include Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission under Venture Capital fund for SCs and how successful is this Mission since inception, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MOSJE) launched the Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission (ASIIM) on 30th September 2020 under the VCF-SC. The mission aims to promote innovation among SC students, researchers, and those working in Technology Business Incubators (TBIs), Atal Incubation Centers (AIC), etc., while supporting the "Stand Up India" initiative.

Till date ₹27.91 Crore have been sanctioned to 94 companies.”

4.14 The Committee note that the Scheme of Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs were launched in 2015 and 2019 respectively with a Corpus of ₹750 crore and ₹180.92 crore. The Committee find that ₹571.60 crore to 234 companies belonging to Scheduled Caste Entrepreneurs and ₹112.35 crore to 22 companies belonging to Backward Classes have been sanctioned. The Committee find that the Scheme will be discontinued by 31st March, 2025. The Committee also find from the Report of the evaluation study conducted by IIPA that the VCF-SC is a distinct Scheme and needs continuation. The Committee feel that the suggestions made in the Evaluation study such as, delays in security clearances, better post loan support, dissemination about the Scheme, grievance redressal mechanism, etc should have been addressed instead of discontinuing the Scheme. Since the Scheme is proposed to be discontinued by 31st March, 2025, the Committee expect that the sanctioned loan will be disbursed to the entrepreneurs in full as out of ₹558.09 crore sanctioned to 143 companies upto December, 2024 under VCF-SC only ₹393.87 crore has been sanctioned. Similarly, under VCF-BC out of ₹94.08 crore sanctioned to 18 companies upto December, 2024 only ₹51.50 crore has been disbursed. The Committee would also like to be informed of the proposals received after December, 2024 upto 31st March, 2025 and the action taken on these proposals.

4.15 The Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBC will be discontinued after 31st March, 2025 and the Department is in the process of formulating a new Venture Capital Fund for deprived and marginalized sections. The Committee hope that the observations made by IIPA in the evaluation study may also be considered before finalizing the new Scheme and take all the necessary steps to make it effective so that it is not required to revise the Scheme frequently. The Committee would like the Department to take requisite action for early finalization of the new Scheme with detailed guidelines for all the implementing agencies. The Committee may like to be apprised of the current status and the time by which the new Scheme is likely to be launched.

CHAPTER-V

PRADHAN MANTRI DAKSHTA AUR KUSHALTA SAMPANN HITGRAHI (PM DAKSH) FOR SCs ,OBCs AND OTHERS

Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana, a Central Sector Scheme was launched during 2020-21. The main objective of the Scheme is to enhance competency level of the target groups in the age group of 18 to 45 years, to make them employable both in self-employment and wage-employment for their socio-economic development. The target groups of this scheme namely SCs, OBCs, EWSs, DNTs, Safai Karamcharis including waste pickers are provided training free of cost. For OBCs and EWSs the income criterion is ₹3 lakh per annum. There is no income limit for SCs, SafaiKaramcharis including waste pickers and DNT.

5.2 As per the information provided by the Department, the Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 including Budgetary Estimate for 2025-26 is as follows:-

(₹ in crore)											
	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			2025-26	
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE Achievme nt	BE	
Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) Yojana (Allocation for SCs)	40.00	40.00	8.90	43.73	60.00	32.74	65.00	40.00	0.00	70.00	
Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM DAKSH) Yojana (Allocation for OBCs and Others)	44.00	44.00	6.04	48.74	60.00	25.60	65.00	40.00	0.00	60.00	

5.3 The Department informed that in PM-DAKSH for SC a target of 51900, 53900 and 56450 beneficiaries was fixed for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 respectively. However, 33021 beneficiaries availed benefit in 2022-23 and 80185 availed benefit in 2023-24. As regards to 2024-25 it is informed that the Empanelment of the TIs has recently been completed and the process of allocating them target is underway. After this process, the training would commence. In 2025-26, a target of 58950 beneficiaries has been fixed.

5.4 As targets fixed for the SC scheme were provided to the Committee but no targets were made available for OBC & Others, the Committee asked about the achievement made alongwith the steps taken to achieve the targets, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“As per the SFC approval, target of 21,300 OBC candidates for 2022-23, 21,800 OBC candidates for 2023-24 and 22,350 OBC candidates for 2024-25 was set to be trained in four different kinds of training viz. Entrepreneurial Development Programmes (EDP), Up-skilling/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Short-Term Courses and Long-Term Courses. Currently, 68,938 OBC candidates have been trained from 2021-22. Further, the Department vide DO letter dated 03.02.2025 has requested Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to merge the PM-DAKSH Scheme with their PMKVY Scheme in order to improve efficiency and optimize public expenditure, given that the PM-DAKSH Scheme largely overlaps with the objectives and structure of PMKVY.”

5.5 Since the budgetary allocation for SC is more than OBC as compared to the population of both these communities, the Committee asked whether the population is taken into consideration for budgetary allocation, the Department informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The population was not taken into consideration for budgetary allocation under the Scheme. In order to cover the eligible target groups and to have better monitoring of the funds, two separate budget heads for SCs and OBCs under the scheme have been opened and total amount allocated under PM-DAKSH Scheme is being bifurcated among these two heads. Funds for Skill training of Safai Karmacharis is being released from SC budget head, hence a higher allocation is kept in that head.”

5.6 In this regard, the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment informed the Committee during the deliberation that:

“Population is not the criteria, in the sense that it is not directly related to the population. I will give you two reasons, one is that States spend a large amount, through their schemes, on the OBCs. The other thing is that there is no Census on the OBCs. But we know that it may be 40per cent or 50 per cent or 60 per cent. The various schemes of the Government actually already covers the OBCs.”

5.7 He also stated that:-

“as per the allocation, minimum 72.5 per cent has to go only for the SC and only the rest can go to the rest of the schemes. So, actually we end up with more than 80 per cent allocation for the SC communities and the balance is for rest of the schemes whether it is OBC, senior citizen or Nasha Mukta and so on and so forth. So, we are largely

targeting the SC communities and we exceed more than 72.5 per cent which is the prescribed norm to more than around 80 percent.”

5.8 On being enquired about the operational status of the Scheme in 2024-25 as there was no expenditure in 2024-25, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“Yes the scheme was in operation in 2024-25. However, regarding non expenditure in 2024-25, it is submitted that the trainings for the year 2023-24 commenced in last quarter of financial year (2023-24) and spilled over to 2024-25 also. The claims of the eligible training partners are under examination in the Department for release of funds. Until assessment is made regarding committed liability and availability of funds under the Scheme, the empanelment of Training partners has been kept on hold. No Training Partner has been on-boarded in the Scheme during current financial year.”

5.9 As regards to the time limit fixed to complete the examination of eligible training partners, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The PM-DAKSH Scheme is being implemented by three Corporations of DoSJE, i.e. National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC), National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC). Being implementing agencies, all the three Corporations have submitted proposals to this Department in r/o committed and pending liabilities and these proposals are under active examination. Once the examination process is completed and administrative/financial approval/concurrence is obtained, the budget available in the current financial year will be released to training partners. For the balance proposals funds will be released from the next year's budgetary allocation.

5.10 The Committee enquired about the laid down procedure for availing the benefits of the Scheme alongwith number of applications received / rejected from various categories under the Scheme during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment informed *vide* written reply that:-

“To avail the benefits of the scheme, the eligible and interested candidates who will register herself / himself on the PM-DAKSH Portal / Mobile App and applied for the offered training programme will be selected based on the eligibility criteria, relevant documents, and psychometric test. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the training institute for mobilisation of the eligible and interested candidates. The Selection of eligible candidates is be finalized by the Selection Committee having Members from the concerned Training Institute, Nodal Officer / District Officer of SCAs; Officer from District Social Welfare Department; Representative from Nationalized Bank; Representative of Government / Collector Office; Representative from concerned industry; Representative from the ministry / department / corporations etc. (At-least three members from above). At least one member must be from Government Organisation. The Training Institutes (TI) should ensure educational qualification specified for the concerned Job

Role/Training Programme. In case of any violation, no payment shall be made for such candidate(s). It is the responsibility of empanelled training institutes to commence training at their centres as per scheme provisions. The details of applications received and rejected during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 is being collected from the empanelled training partners and will be provided shortly.”

5.11 When asked about the amount of financial assistance provided to each beneficiary under the Scheme and whether amount fixed for each beneficiary was sufficient to get top class training, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“Under PM-Daksh Scheme, trainees are provided free of cost skill development training. The training cost is given to training institutes as per the common cost norms of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). Hence, the amount per candidate given to training institute is sufficient to get top class training as common cost norms are being governed by MSDE. However, the candidates are being given the stipend. Till 2023-24, the skill development training was provided in four different categories, the details of financial assistance in terms of stipend provided to beneficiaries under different types of training are as under:-

- a) **Short Term Courses-** The trainees are paid stipend @ ₹1,500/- per month for SC candidates, ₹1,000/- per month to OBCs/EBCs/ DNTs and ₹1,500/- per month to Sanitation Workers including waste pickers and their dependents.
- b) **Long Term Courses-** The trainees are paid stipend @ ₹1,500/- per month for SC candidates and ₹1,000/- per month to OBCs/EBCs/DNTs candidates.
- c) **Entrepreneurial Development Programmes (EDP):** No stipend is paid as training is of very short duration.
- d) **Up-skilling/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)-** As the trainees are already employed, they are paid @₹2,500/- per person per programme to SCs/OBCs/EBCs/DNT candidates and @₹500/- per person to Safai Karamcharis including Waste Pickers in the form of stipend, for duration of training of Up-skilling/RPL, towards compensation of their wage loss, during the period of training.”

5.12 The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampana Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) for SC, OBC and others since 2020-21. It is found that during the year 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Department was able to spend ₹14.94 crore out of RE of ₹84.00 crore, ₹58.34 crore out of RE of ₹140.00 crore respectively. Further, the Department has not been able to spend even a single rupee in 2024-25 till February, 2025 out of Revised Estimate of ₹80.00 crore as empanelment of Training Institutes was delayed. The Committee are concerned with the socio-economic development of SC,

OBC and others, hence, believe that any slackness on behalf of the concerned authorities would defeat the purpose of the Scheme. The Committee are of the opinion that the Schemes instituted with the noble objectives cannot be left at the mercy of the concerned authorities, particularly when the Government of India is making all efforts for the socio-economic development of the targeted communities by allocating huge funds. The Committee would therefore, like to recommend that in future all necessary steps are taken to ensure that the empanelment of Training Institutes, etc. is not delayed and the necessary formalities are timely completed. The Committee would like the Department to take necessary measures so that the targets fixed are achieved. The Committee would also like the Department to enhance the targets keeping into consideration the population of these categories i.e., SC, OBC and others so that the maximum people can take benefit of the Scheme.

5.13 The Committee have found that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has sent a proposal to Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to merge the PM-DAKSH Scheme with the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) Scheme in order to improve efficiency and optimize public expenditure as the PM-DAKSH Scheme largely overlaps with the objectives and structure of PMKVY. The Committee urge that as the proposal has been sent recently, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment may ensure that the beneficiary targeted for 2025-26 are not affected. The Committee may like to be apprised of the status of the proposals received and also of the implementation of the Scheme in 2025-26.

CHAPTER-VI

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ACHIEVERS SCHEME (SHYREYAS) FOR SCs

Central Sector Umbrella Scheme namely “Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers (SHREYAS) for Scheduled Castes (SCs)” comprises of 4 Sub-Schemes namely Top Class Education for SC students, Free Coaching for SC and OBC students, National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Castes and National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste students.

National Fellowship for SC

6.2 Under the scheme fellowship is provided to Scheduled Caste students for pursuing higher education leading to Ph.D degrees in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences in Indian Universities/Institutions/ Colleges recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC). The scheme offers 2000 new slots every year (500 for science stream and 1500 for Humanities and Social Sciences) to such SC students who have qualified the National Eligibility Test-Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC or UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-JRF joint test.

National Overseas Scholarships for SCs

6.3 Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to facilitate the low income students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, De-notified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers and Traditional Artisans category to obtain higher education viz., Master degree or Ph.D. courses by studying abroad thereby improving their economic and social status. Total slots allotted under the scheme are 125 every year, out of which 115 slots are reserved for students belonging to Scheduled Caste, 06 slots for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes and 04 slots are for Landless Agricultural Labourers candidates and traditional artisans. 30% of the scholarships for each selection year are earmarked for female candidates. Annual family income ceiling in the Scheme is ₹8 lakh.

Top Class Education for SCs

6.4 Under the Scheme, scholarship is provided to meritorious SC students with annual family income upto ₹8 lakh per annum for pursuing studies beyond 12th class. The Scheme supports talented students pursuing higher education in 273 top class premier institutions of the country such as all the IIMs / IITs/ IIITs / AIIMSs/ NITs/NIFTs/ NIDs/ IHMs/NLUs and other Central Government Institutions, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) A++ and A+ Accredited Institutions and Top 100 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Institutions. Thirty percent (30%) of slots allotted to the Institution are reserved for eligible SC girl students.

Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs

6.4 The objective of the Scheme is to provide coaching of good quality for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) candidates to enable them to appear in competitive and entrance examinations for obtaining appropriate jobs in Public/Private Sector as well as for securing admission in reputed technical and professional higher education institutions. The ceiling of the total family income under the scheme is Rs 8 lakhs per annum. The ratio of SC to OBC students are 70:30 and 30% slots are reserved for females in each category. Since 2023-24 the scheme is being run by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF) which is the Central Nodal Agency for the scheme through Dr. Ambedkar Centre for Excellence (DACE) established in 19 empanelled Central Universities.

6.5 As per the information provided by the Department, the Budgetary Estimate, the Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 alongwith Budgetary Estimate for 2025-26 is as follows:-

	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			2025-26
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
National Fellowship for SCs	173.00	159.00	114.25	163.00	188.00	183.14	188.00	212.00	138.18	212.00
Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs	47.00	27.00	18.41	47.00	14.82	7.76	35.00	18.00	11.52	20.00
Top Class Education for SCs	108.00	108.00	85.67	111.00	100.00	83.84	110.00	103.00	34.12	110.00

(₹ in crore)

National Overseas Scholarship for SCs	36.00	50.00	75.44	50.00	85.00	88.57	95.00	95.00	55.50	130.00
Total: Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs	364.00	344.00	293.77	371.00	387.82	363.31	428.00	428.00	239.32	472.00

6.6 On being enquired, whether the budgetary allocation made for 2024-25 would be fully utilized under SHREYAS alongwith the current status of budgetary allocation, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“Yes, the budgetary allocation made for 2024-25 will be utilized for the various schemes under SHREYAS.

The SHYREYAS-SC scheme has 04 sub-schemes, namely Top Class Education for SCs, Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs, National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SCs and National Fellowship for SCs. Scheme-wise current Status of Budgetary allocation, Expenditure and pendency are as under:-

S. No.	Name of the Scheme	BE (in crores)	RE (in crores)	Exp. (in crores)	Pending in Department (in crores)	Expected proposals
1.	Top Class Education for SCs	110.00	103.00	51.69	52.46	No proposal are expected by 31.03.2025
2.	Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs	35.00	18.00	12.24	0.56	Proposals of Rs. 3.00 Cr. Are expected by 31.03.2025
3.	National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SCs etc.	95.00	95.00	59.59	00.00	Proposals of Rs. 35.00 Cr. Are expected by 31.03.2025
4.	National Fellowship for SCs	188.00	212.00	138.18	18.00	Proposals of Rs. 55.00 Cr. Are expected by 31.03.2025

”

6.7 As regards the procedure to receive proposals from empanelled Universities for release of funds under Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The empanelled Central Universities issue advertisements for the selection of candidates under the Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs scheme. After shortlisting the candidates, the respective university submits a detailed proposal, including a list of all the selected candidates, to the Ministry through the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF) which is the implementing agency. The first instalment of funds (50%) is then released. Upon the completion of 75% of the course, the empanelled Central University submits a second proposal, along with a list of students who have been attending classes regularly. This list must include the students’ monthly attendance sheets and is forwarded to the Ministry through DAF. Based on this, the second instalment of funds is released.”

6.8 On being enquired about the reasons due to which the empanelled Universities were not able to send proposals under Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs on time during 2024-25 alongwith the action taken to ensure that the proposals are received on time and the beneficiaries are not deprived from the benefits of the Scheme, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“The delay in sending proposals under the Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs scheme during 2024-25 was primarily due to the late commencement of courses in the academic year 2023-24. As a result the whole process has been delayed in 2024-25. However, proposals for release of funds are expected to be received within the month of February/March, 2025. Proposal for the year 2024-25 has only been received from one University *i.e.* Manipur University for release of funds. The proposal for release of funds to the tune of ₹55,95,000/- is under process.

The Ministry, through the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF), is actively following up with all empanelled Central Universities to ensure the timely commencement of classes and to facilitate the submission of proposals for the release of funds.”

6.9 On being asked about the steps taken to achieve the targets fixed for each year under the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs alongwith the action taken thereon, the Department submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“In order to achieve target fixed for each year, Scheme Guidelines were revised from the selection year 2023-24. After revision of the Scheme Guidelines, several requests were made to all 55 Central Universities to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF) to become part of the Scheme. But, as on date only 19 Central Universities have signed MoU with DAF. MoUs were signed in the Month of October, 2023 as a result of which, most of the Universities started classes in the Month of January-February 2024 and completed in January 2025. That is why batches for the year 2024-25 could not be started timely. The Ministry through DAF is in continuous follow-up with all empanelled Central Universities to ensure timely commencement of classes and send the proposals for release of funds. The proposals are expected to be received in next 1-2 months.”

6.10. As regards to the budgetary allocation for Top Class Education for SCs remains stagnant, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The budgetary allocation for the Top Class Education Scheme for SCs has remained stagnant primarily because the total number of scholarship slots to be filled each year is fixed by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). As there has been no need for additional funds to accommodate the scholarships within the allotted slots, allocation has not been proposed for an increase. Moreover, the number of fresh applications received each year (with slots fixed per institute) has been consistently lower than the number set by the EFC.”

6.11. On being enquired about the number of applications received for National Overseas Scholarship during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the number of scholarship awarded every year, the Department responded *vide* written reply that:-

“The number of applications received and scholarship awarded under the National Overseas Scholarship from 2022-23 to 2024-25 may be seen from the table under:

Sr. No.	Selection Year	No. of applications received	No. of complete application.	No. of Candidates selected
1.	2022-23	498	163	125
2.	2023-24	530	186	125
3.	2024-25	853	280	125

6.12. On being asked to comment on making family income one of the eligibility criteria for National Overseas Scholarship deprives many educationally qualified students from availing education from best Institutions abroad, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“The income ceiling has been fixed as one of the eligibility criteria under the Scheme with the objective of prioritizing those in greater financial need. The income criterion serves as a necessary mechanism to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the most disadvantaged sections of Society.”

6.13. On being enquired whether the Department feels that the persons whose annual income crosses income eligibility criteria fixed for SCs under National Overseas Scholarship can afford the expenses of studying in best Institutions abroad, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment *vide* written reply that:-

“The income eligibility criterion under the National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) Scheme is set to ensure that financial assistance is provided to those most in need. While exceeding the prescribed income limit does not necessarily imply complete financial capability to afford education abroad, the scheme prioritizes candidates from marginalised sections due to availability of limited scholarship slots.”

6.14. On being asked about the evaluation study of SHREYAS, the Committee were *inter-alia* informed *vide* written reply that:-

- “(i) Evaluation of Top-Class Education Scheme for SC and Free Coaching for SC and OBC students was done in the year 2020-21 by National Productivity Council.
- (ii) The evaluation study on the scheme of National Overseas Scholarship and National Fellowship for SCs was conducted in the year 2019-20 by Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.”

6.15 With regard to the time period fixed to conduct evaluation study of the Schemes of SHREYAS the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“The Department of Expenditure, through its Office Memorandum No. F. No. 42(02/PF-II/2014 dated 10/01/2020, has framed guidelines for the continuation of public-funded on-going schemes. As per paragraph 2(III) of the Office Memorandum under reference, it is explicitly stated that prior to the approval for the continuation of each scheme, an evaluation report and an outcome review are mandatory. Accordingly, the Department has already initiated the process of conducting the evaluation study for all four sub-schemes under the SHREYAS-SC for its continuation in the upcoming 16th financial cycle which will be commencing from F.Y 2026-27. The evaluation study of the scheme will be completed well before the commencement of the next financial cycle.”

6.16 On being asked, whether Schemes falling under SHREYAS will be able to enhance the status of SCs by improving their economic and social backwardness, the Department responded as under:-

“The SHREYAS-SC Scheme has definitely contributed to enhancement of the educational standard of Scheduled Caste students as financial assistance is provided to meritorious students for pursuing higher education in premier Indian and Foreign Institutes. This support helps in reducing financial barriers, enabling SC students to access quality education. By improving educational opportunities, the scheme has fostered greater socio-economic mobility, enhanced career prospects, and addressed both economic and social backwardness among SC communities.”

6.17 The Committee note that the Department implements an Umbrella Scheme of SHREYAS consisting of 4 sub-schemes viz. National fellowship for SCs, National Overseas Scholarship for SCs, Top Class Education for SCs and Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs. On the scrutiny of the Budgetary Allocation made for the scheme in 2024-25, it is found that the Department was not able to utilize budgetary allocation fully on any of the four sub-schemes. The Committee are made to understand that proposals of ₹3.00 crore for National Overseas Scholarship Scheme and ₹55.00 crore under National Fellowship for SCs are expected to be received by 31 March, 2025. The Committee also found that the proposal for ₹52.46 crore under Top Class Education for SCs and ₹18.00 crore under National Fellowship for SCs are pending in the Department for approval. The Committee find that proposals to the tune of ₹70.46 crore are pending for approval with the Department as late as February, 2025 and proposals to the tune of ₹93.00 crore under various sub-schemes are expected by 31 March, 2025. The Committee, therefore, recommend that Department should issue instructions to the Institutions/ Organisations to submit the complete proposals within the given time frame to avoid any delay in future. With regard to the proposals of 2024-25 pending with the Department for approval and also the proposals expected by 31 March 2025, the Department may take necessary action for early approval so that funds allocated under this Scheme is utilized fully in this Financial Year. The Committee would like to be apprised in this regard.

6.18 The Committee find that the proposals under Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs were delayed in 2024-25 due to late commencement of courses in the academic year 2023-24 and some proposals are also expected to be received in the month of February/ March, 2025. The Committee also note that the Department have revised the guidelines from the selection year 2023-24 to achieve the target. However, the Memorandum of Understanding required to be signed with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation by all the Central Universities to become part of the Scheme has been signed by 19 out of 55 Central Universities. The Committee would therefore like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to ensure that the MOUs is signed by the remaining Central Universities as early as possible so that the economically disadvantaged Scheduled Caste and other Backward Classes candidates are not deprived from availing benefits of the Scheme. The Committee also desire that the empanelled Central Universities may be persuaded to timely commence the classes without any further delay and take necessary measures to expeditiously release the funds to them.

6.19 The Committee find that during the period 2022-23 to 2024-25 out of 1881 applications received for National Overseas Scholarship, 629 applications were complete and 325 candidates were selected for the Scholarship. Keeping into consideration the number of aspiring candidates for National Overseas Scholarship, the Committee feel that there is a urgent need to increase the number of 125 slots fixed under the Scholarship

Scheme each year. The Committee are of the strong opinion that the income eligibility criteria fixed for the Scholarship Schemes deprives many meritorious candidates from availing the benefits of the Scheme. The Committee, therefore, desire that the income fixed for making candidate eligible for scholarship needs to be reviewed so that more candidates are covered under the Scheme.

6.20 The Committee note that an evaluation study was conducted in 2020-21 for Top Class Education Scheme for SC and in 2019-20 for National Overseas Scholarship Scheme. The Committee find that the Department has again initiated the process of conducting the evaluation study for all the four sub-schemes under the SHREYAS for SCs for its continuation in the upcoming 16th Financial cycle commencing in 2026-27. Since the Evaluation process has begun, the Committee would like the Department to take suggestions from all the stakeholders while evaluating all the Schemes so that the difficulties faced by them in implementing the Scheme are taken care of while framing the new guidelines. The Committee also desire that the necessary measures may be taken for timely completion of the evaluation process and the Report on Evaluation Study should be ready before the commencement of financial year 2026-27 to avoid any disruption in continuation of the Scheme.

CHAPTER-VII

PM YOUNG ACHIVERS'SCHOLARSHIP AWARD SCHEME FOR VIBRANT INDIA FOR OBCS AND OTHERS (PM-YASAVI)

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has identified the key indicators for socio-economic development of OBC/EBC/DNT community by proposing an Umbrella Scheme for educational empowerment by giving all scholarship schemes a uniform pattern and platform to make it more competitive with other lucrative schemes to widen the network. Some sections of the OBCs are still backward in socio-economic terms.

7.2 The existing Centrally sponsored Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) Students and Post-Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) Schemes were formulated in the years 1998-99. Further, the scheme for educational empowerment of EBC/DNT was launched in the year 2014-15. All these scholarship schemes have been operational since their inception. The schemes aim towards educational empowerment of the socio-economically backward classes, thereby facilitating the completion of education of the most vulnerable sections of the target population.

7.3 Keeping in view the present implementation status of various educational schemes, an umbrella scheme Namely "PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBCs and Others (PM-YASASVI)" for OBC, EBC and DNT students has been formulated having following five sub-schemes. The erstwhile Schemes of Dr. Ambedkar Scheme of Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs have been subsumed in the umbrella Scheme of PM YASASVI with effect from 2021-22.

- i. Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students
- ii. Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students
- iii. Top Class School Education for OBC, EBC and DNT Students
- iv. Top Class College Education for OBC, EBC and DNT Students
- v. Construction of Hostel for OBC Boys and Girls

7.4 The details of the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and the Actual Expenditure of the Department for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 including Budget Estimates for 2025-26 is as follows:-

	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			2025-26
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
Post-Matric Scholarship for OBCs	1083.00	1083.00	1007.04	1087.00	1087.00	988.45	921.00	921.00	314.79	1250.00
Pre-matric Scholarship to OBCs	478.00	394.61	361.13	281.00	281.00	195.66	210.00	210.00	43.91	300.00
Top Class School		83.39	1.85	100.00	100.00	6.73	150.00	60.00	1.36	100.00
Top Class College				90.00	90.00	111.40	515.00	159.63	15.85	500.00
Boys & Girls Hostels for OBCs	20.00	20.00	18.80	30.00	45.00	14.41	40.00	30.00	7.21	40.00
Total: PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM YASASVI) for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs	1581.00	1581.00	1388.82	1588.00	1603.00	1316.65	1836.00	1380.63	383.12	2190.00

7.5 As per the information targets fixed / achieved in each of the Scheme under PM – YASASVI in 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 is as follows:-

Name of the Scheme/project/programme	Division	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for last three years	2025-26 Target
		Target	Achievement	Shortfall, if any, indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement	Shortfall, if any, indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement	Shortfall, if any, indicating reasons in brief		
Pre Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students	BC Division	102.00 lakh	26.04 lakh*	75.96 lakh	112.53 lakh	16.23 lakh*	96.30 lakh	123.78 lakh	Not received from the States/UTs	Doesn't arise	12.50 % *	136.16 lakh
Post-matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students		45.1 lakh	25.55 lakh*	19.55 lakh	49.61 lakh	24.45 lakh*	25.16 lakh	54.57 lakh	Not received from the States/UTs	Doesn't arise	33.50 % *	60.00 lakh
Top Class Education in Schools for OBC, EBC and DNT Students		30000	1275 Slots	28725	30000	3177	26823	30000	In progress	In progress	Doesn't arise	30000
Top Class Education in Colleges for OBC, EBC and DNT Students		Scheme is operation from 2023-24	18150	5781	12369	19965	In progress	In progress	Doesn't arise	21961		
Construction of Hostel for OBC boys and girls		800 Seats	1800 Seats	NIL	1000 Seats	1146 Seats	NIL	1300 Seats	200 Seats	1100 Seats	100 %	1300 Seats

TOP CLASS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS FOR OBC, EBC AND DNT STUDENTS

7.6 Under the Scheme grants are provided for tuition fee etc as required by the school, subject to a ceiling of ₹75,000/- per annum per student of class 9 and 10 and ₹1,25,000/- per annum per student of class 11 and 12. CBSE/ICSE affiliated reputed and performing higher secondary schools having classes from 9 to 12 are covered under the scheme. Number of slots are distributed across States every year. Students have to apply on the NSP portal and students are selected based on State-wise merit list. Funds are released directly into the account of beneficiaries through DBT mode.

7.7 When asked about the reasons for the low utilization of funds under Top Class School Scheme as the actual expenditure was very insignificant during the last three years, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted as under:-

“The details are as under:

- a) The Scheme is a new intervention during the current Financial Cycle and implemented through National scholarship Portal (NSP) as per scheme guidelines and extant norms of NSP.
- b) Top Class Education in Schools for OBC, EBC & DNT Students scheme is implemented from 2022-23. Since the scheme is recently implemented, it is still taking time to stabilise for its optimum performance.
- c) During the current Financial Year 2024-25, under Top Class Education in Schools for OBC, EBC & DNT Students scheme, 43686 applications have been received on NSP and verification of these applications is under process.
- d) Merit list are generated after final verification of applications received on Portal by the concerned Institute Nodal Officer/ State Nodal Officer and payment of scholarship are released to the applicants as per their merit.
- e) Department is proposing to utilize the savings in the slot during the current year for maximum utilization of fund for ensuring that benefits reach the targeted beneficiaries.
- f) As per the scheme guidelines, tuition fee/hostel fee etc. are disbursed as scholarship as required by the Institute subject to a cap of ₹75,000/- per annum for Class 9th & 10th and ₹1,25,000/- per annum for Class 11th and 12th.
- g) The benefit under the scheme is provided to the students from Government/Aided/Private/Local Body Schools.”

7.8 On enquired about the justification for allocating ₹100.00 crore to Top Class School Education for 2025-26 when more than 95 per cent budget allocated during the last year remained unutilized, the Department submitted as under:-

- a) Taking into account the past experience in implementation of the Scheme, the Department has reduced the Budget allocation to ₹100 crore in 2025-26 as against ₹150 crore in 2024-25.
- b) The Scheme is a new intervention during the current Financial Cycle and implemented through National scholarship Portal (NSP) as per scheme guidelines and extant norms of NSP.
- c) The scheme has been implemented from 2022-23. Since the scheme is recently implemented, it is taking time to stabilize for its optimum performance.
- d) During the current Financial Year 2024-25, 43686 applications have been received on NSP and verification of these applications is under process.
- e) The Department is planning to conduct awareness campaigns for the potential beneficiaries through print and electronic media at State and District level. All the State Govts/UTs are also instructed to spread awareness among the students about the scheme."

{Replies to LOPs question no.6 (v)}

7.9 As regards to the timelines fixed for receiving applications under the Scheme for granting necessary approval, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

"The entire process is undertaken through National Scholarship Portal (NSP). The Portal is open for inviting applications during the months of June-July every year as per extant norms of DBT Mission and NSP. Time line for verification of applications is by the end of December. However, in some special cases on request of verifying authorities (State Nodal Officers), DBT Mission may consider extension of time limit for a limited period. During the current year, the verification process was closed on 31.01.2025. Further process has already been initiated as per extant norms and disbursement of scholarships is expected to be completed by the 1st week of March 2025."

CONSTRUCTION OF HOSTELS FOR OBC BOYS AND GIRLS

7.10 State Governments and UT Administrations and the Institutions of repute ranked in the latest NIRF rankings of Ministry of Education, are eligible to receive grant for construction of hostels. Agencies applying for assistance under the Scheme should have clear title and possession over the land where the hostel is to be constructed. The cost of construction of hostels for Boys has to be shared between the Centre and the State in 60:40 ratio (in case of Girls Hostels 90% of cost will be borne by the Central Govt). In case of Union Territories, the Central Assistance is 100% and for North Eastern States and 02 Himalayan States (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), it is 90%. In case of Institutions of repute that are ranked in the latest NIRF rankings of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India,

the Central Assistance is 100% irrespective of regional States. Construction work of the Hostel has to be completed within eighteen months from award of work order or two years from the release of 1st instalment of Central assistance, whichever is earlier. In no case the time will be extended beyond 2 years. The cost per hostel seat is ₹3.50 lakh per seat in North Eastern Region/Himalayan Regions, and ₹3.00 lakh per seat in rest of country, or as per the schedule of the rates for the concerned State Government, whichever is lower.

7.11 The details of number of hostels sanctioned since the inception of the Scheme and occupancy status of these hostels is as follow:-

Financial Year	Funds released (Rs. in lakh)	No. of Hostels	No. of seats
1998-99	130.53	4	350
1999-2000	300.00	38	3110
2000-01	500.00	48	2410
2001-02	1077.61	53	5000
2002-03	1433.11	83	5808
2003-04	1004.03	55	4061
2004-05	1277.70	72	5821
2005-06	1792.26	101	7451
2006-07	1958.33	82	4520
2007-08	2054.25	95	6200
2008-09	3454.66	116	8155
2009-10	2051.20	59	4000
2010-11	2579.45	57	4035
2011-12	1606.89	33	2578
2012-13	1476.00	21	2100
2013-14	2319.50	28	2050
2014-15	3021.46	34	2950
2015-16	4029.49	26	2800
2016-17	3982.45	21	2719
2017-18	4249.75	5	600
2018-19	2600.00	3	300
2019-20	2128.96	20	1750
2020-21	3158.53	16	3000
2021-22	1877.00	11	2050
2022-23	1879.99	8	1800
2023-24	1430.70	6	1146

7.12 As regards to the time period fixed for construction and making hostel functional, the Committee informed *vide* written reply that:-

“As per the scheme guidelines the construction work of the Hostel has to be completed within eighteen months from award of work order or two years from the release of 1st instalment of Central assistance, whichever is earlier. Further, it is seen that almost every hostel has exceeded this time limit.”

7.13 When asked about the reasons for delay in completion/construction of schools within the stipulated time, the Department submitted as under:

- (i) Administrative Hurdles: There may be inefficiencies or delays in the approval process at various levels—central, state, or local governments.
- (ii) Funding Issues: While the scheme is centrally sponsored, there may be delays in the release of funds from the central government or issues with matching state contributions. Financial constraints or misallocation of funds can slow down progress.
- (iii) Procurement and Contracting Issues: Delays can happen in the tendering process, award of contracts, and procurement of construction materials. If contractors face logistical challenges, workforce shortages, or supply chain disruptions, the construction timeline can be affected.
- (iv) Design and Structural Approvals: In some cases, the design of the hostel may require multiple revisions or further approvals. This can delay the construction, especially if the design is complex or needs to comply with specific guidelines related to accessibility, safety, and other regulations.
- (v) COVID-19 Pandemic Impact: The pandemic caused delays in various infrastructure projects due to labour shortages, restrictions on movement, and disruptions in the supply chain. Though things are gradually returning to normal, the aftereffects can still impact the timely completion of projects.

7.14 On being enquired about the criteria fixed for sanctioning of hostels for each State/ UT, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“The Scheme aims at providing hostel facilities to students belonging to socially and educationally backward classes, especially from rural areas, to enable them to pursue secondary and higher education. Priority will be given for the proposals for construction of hostels for under-graduate students vis-a-vis below under-graduate level. All the State Governments/UT Administrations/Central Institutions can submit the proposal for construction of hostels.

While sanctioning hostels, priority will be given to:-

(i) Regions/districts not covered so far, and

(ii) Districts/towns having a large number of educational institutions.

Priority shall be given to such hostels to be constructed within the University/Institution's campus. As far as possible, hostels will be constructed in close vicinity of educational institutions. It shall be the responsibility of Management of the University/ institutions to maintain the hostels as per standard prescribed norms."

It is stated that the Scheme is fund limited in nature. Hence proposals under the Scheme are considered on first come first serve basis. Based on number of complete proposals received from the State/UTs, hostels are sanctioned to the concerned States/UTs subject to availability of funds."

7.15 The State-wise details of the sanctioned and completed hostels are as under:

Name of State/UT	Total No. of Hostels sanctioned	Completed	Incomplete
Andhra Pradesh	117	88	29
Bihar	10	4	6
Chattisgarh	16	6	10
Gujarat	32	29	3
Haryana	5	5	0
Himachal Pradesh	4	2	2
Jammu & Kashmir	7	4	3
Jharkhand	38	33	5
Karnataka	165	156	9
Kerala	8	5	3
Madhya Pradesh	95	78	17
Odisha	21	7	14
Rajasthan	23	22	1
Tamil Nadu	236	207	29
Telangana	79	61	18
Uttar Pradesh	108	98	10
Uttarakhand	2	0	2
West Bengal	12	7	5
Assam	18	6	12
Manipur	24	13	11
Pudducherry	1	0	1
Tripura	3	2	1
Sikkim	14	6	8
Goa	2	0	2

Central Universities/ Institutes	55	9	46
TOTAL	1095	848	247

7.16 When asked about the criteria for sanctioning funds under Boys & Girls Hostels for OBC and the purpose for which funds are utilized, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment responded as under:-

“The revised norms applicable from 2021-22 is as under:-

S. No	Item	Revised norms applicable from 2021-22	
		Recipient Agency	% of Central Share
1.	Funding Pattern for construction	i) State Govt. (other than in the North East and Himalayan States) for Boys students	60%
		ii) State Govt. for Girls students	90%
		iii) State Governments. in the North East Region and Himalayan States	90%
		iv) UT Administration	100%
		v) Institution of repute ranked in the latest NIRF rankings of Ministry of Education	100%
2.	Equipment Grant	One time non-recurring grant of ₹2,500/- per Hostel seat for provision of essential hostel furniture and equipment.	

- Release of funds under the Scheme is subject to compliance of instructions issued by the Department of Expenditure vide OM No. 1(13)PFMS/ FCD/2020 dated 23.03.2021 towards monitoring utilization of the funds released.
- The implementation of the scheme would be in accordance with the provisions of GFR 2017. Submission of UC should be as per prescribed forms as per GFR, 2017. Further, as per provisions of rule 230(8) of GFR, 2017, all interest or other earnings against Grants-in-aid or advances released to any grantee institution should be mandatorily remitted to the Consolidated Fund of India immediately after finalization of accounts.”

7.17 When enquired about the day to day expenses for running hostels and maintenance expenditure of hostels, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment stated in a written reply that:-

“As per the scheme guidelines, State Governments/UT Administrations/Institutions, which receive Central assistance under the Scheme are responsible for day to day expenses for running these hostels and maintenance expenditure of hostels. They have to fulfill the following obligations, and have to give an undertaking for fulfilling the following conditions, while submitting their proposals:-

- (i) The entire expenditure on procurement of land (if any), staffing, other maintenance and day- to-day expenditure shall be borne by the implementing agency(s) concerned.
- (ii) The Hostel should have for each inmate, a bed, a study table, a chair, and a cupboard to store personal belongings.
- (iii) It must be ensured that the inmates of the hostel are provided with wholesome and nutritious food.
- (iv) Hostels should have adequate water supply, inclusive of potable water.
- (v) For conservation of water, water efficient taps and WCs (two option flushing) should be used.
- (vi) The common room should be provided with newspapers, magazines, indoor games and a TV set.
- (vii) The implementing agency should provide an adequate number of computers out of their own resources or from MP LADS/MLA LADS fund for the computer-cum-reading room which should also have a small library of informative books.
- (viii) There should be arrangements for periodical health check-ups of students, and for a part- time doctor on call, whenever necessary.
- (ix) A Warden, at least on a part-time basis, should be employed for the smooth running of the hostel. In case of Girls Hostel, a female warden and other supporting staffs must be ensured.
- (x) For safety of the inmates, a boundary wall should be constructed with a robust system of watch and ward essentially put in place.
State Governments/UTs/Central Institutions are required to submit quarterly progress report through which progress under the scheme is monitored.”

7.18 On being enquired about the system followed by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to fix the targets under each of the Schemes falling under PM-YASASVI, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The target under each of the schemes falling under PM-YASASVI has been determined based on evaluation during the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) meeting held on 19.03.2021. The following key criteria were taken into account while fixing the targets under the scheme:

- a) Budget Allocation: Availability of financial resources under the scheme.
- b) State/UT Demands: Requests and requirements from various State Governments and Union Territories.
- c) Target Group: Population of the target beneficiaries covered under the scheme.
- d) Income Criteria: The prescribed income limits for the parents of the beneficiaries.”

7.19 When asked about the reasons due to which target fixed under each of the Scheme under PM-YASASVI could not be achieved since 2022-23 and the steps taken to ensure that the target fixed are achieved, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“Major reasons are as follows:

- a) Non-receipt of proposals from some States/UTs
- b) Incomplete proposals received from some States/UTs
- c) Sufficient demand has not been raised by North Eastern Region (10% of total budget is earmarked for North Eastern Region). In NER, only 4 states namely Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim avail the benefits under the scheme and remaining states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya do not have OBC population. Hence they don't avail benefit under the scheme.
- d) Top Class Education in Colleges for OBC, EBC & DNT Students scheme is implemented from 2023-24 and Top Class Education in Schools for OBC, EBC & DNT Students scheme is implemented from 2022-23. Since these schemes are recently implemented, the scheme is still taking time to stabilise for its optimum performance.

The steps taken to achieve the targets are as under:

- a) Due to budgetary constraint and 'funds limited' nature of the existing Scheme, it is not possible for the Central Government to meet the entire demand of the States/UTs. Therefore, a Notional Allocation (NA) under the Scheme is prepared and conveyed in the beginning of the financial year to States/UTs in proportion to total OBC population as per census.
- b) Every participating State/UT, on or before 28th February of the preceding year, will prepare a State level Annual Plan for the scheme indicating targets, eligibility, proposed coverage separately for poorest households, processes for identification, identification of courses having employment potential, systems for monitoring etc.
- c) The Department constitutes a Project Appraisal Committee to appraise and approve the Annual Action Plans. These plans are appraised at the Centre and the outlay for each State are finalized before 30th April, of every year as per the annual increase indicated under the funding pattern.
- d) Quarterly progress reports/Utilization Certificates are sought from the States/UTs
- e) National Conferences/Regional conferences are held regularly with the States/UTs.
- f) The Department has set up Project Monitoring Units (PMU) for effective monitoring of the schemes. They also visit State Govts/UTs to overcome hurdles faced by the Department in implementing the schemes.”

7.20 On being enquired whether the Department would be able to spend the budgetary allocation made for 2024-25, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“In current Financial Year 2024-25, an amount of ₹470.90 crore has been released under PM-YASASVI Scheme till date and an amount of ₹576.90 crore is in pipeline for releasing the funds under PM-YASASVI. Scheme-wise details are as under:

S. No.	Scheme for OBCs	RE (in Cr.)	Total Expenditure as on date (in Cr.)	Amount in Pipeline (in Cr.)	Remarks
1	Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC & DNT Students	210.00	66.63	37.85	
2	Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC & DNT Students	921.00	310.78	452.22	
3	Top Class College	159.63	80.88	78.75	-
4	Top Class School	60.00	1.54	1.09	32378 Applications against 28108 slots are under process for verification.
5	Boys & Girls Hostels for OBCs Students	30.00	11.07	6.99	

7.21 When enquired about the provision to review the Scheme and the last review held, the Department submitted as under:-

“The scheme has been approved for the 15th Finance Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26). The scheme will be reviewed after 2025-26.”

7.22 With regard to under-utilization of funds sanctioned under the Scheme the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted before the Committee during deliberation that:

“The expenditure here is not very encouraging. There are issues on this Scheme primarily because of low expenditure.”

7.23 The Committee note that the PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBC and others (PM-YASASVI) implemented for the educational empowerment consists of five Schemes viz, Pre-Matric, Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, Top Class School, Top Class College education and Construction of Hostel for OBC boys and girls. The Committee find that during the year 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 the Department spent ₹1388.82 crore, ₹1316.65 crore and ₹383.12 crore out of revised allocation of ₹1581.00 crore, ₹1603.00 crore and ₹1380.63 crore respectively under the Scheme. The Committee also find that the Department was not able to spend the allocated budget fully during these years as the Department did not either receive proposals from some States/UTs or incomplete proposals were received from some States/UTs. Further, Top Class Education in schools/ college Schemes are since being implemented from 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively, hence, they are taking time to stabilize for its optimum performance. The Committee appreciate the Department for taking necessary measures such as organizing National Conference/ Regional Conference, setting up of Project Monitoring Units and expect that the measures taken will improve the performance of PM-YASASVI and the situation of 2024-25 where Department could spend only ₹383.12 crore out of Revised Estimate of ₹1380.63 crore will not be repeated in 2025-26. The Committee desire that the measures taken should be scrupulously followed and the requisite steps

may be taken to ensure that the Top Class School/ College Education Schemes stabilize at the earliest and the performance is optimized as sufficient time has passed since these Schemes came into existence.

7.24 The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment provides grant to State Governments and UT Administrations and the Institutions of repute to construct hostels for OBC Boys and Girls. The Committee find that out of 1095 hostels sanctioned by the Department, the construction of only 848 have completed and 247 are still incomplete due to Administrative hurdles, procurement and contracting issues, design and structural approvals, etc. The Committee desire that the 18 months period stipulated for constructions of a hostel should be strictly complied by the respective Institutions, State Governments and UT Administration and any hindrance in the construction activity should be resolved within the least possible time so that the construction work do not exceed the prescribed time period. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Project Monitoring Units set up to monitor Projects may be directed to regularly monitor the construction work and take necessary steps to settle the issues hampering the construction work.

CHAPTER-VIII

SCHEME OF RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL IN TARGETED AREA (SHRESHTA) FOR SCs

8.1 The objective of the SHRESHTA scheme is to enhance the reach of development interventions of the Government and fill the gap in service deficient SCs population dominant areas, in the sector of education through the efforts of Voluntary Organizations and other organizations and to provide environment for socio-economic upliftment and overall development of the Scheduled Castes (SCs).

8.2 The Scheme is operated under two Modes. Under Mode-I of the Scheme, every year a specified number of meritorious SC students in States/UTs are selected through a nation-wide entrance test conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA) for providing quality residential education in top-class CBSE / State Board affiliated Residential High Schools. Under Mode II, financial assistance is provided to NGOs for running and maintenance of projects related to education for Scheduled Caste students. The Scheme broadly covers 3 types of projects namely (i) Residential Schools (ii) Non Residential Schools (iii) Hostels for both for Primary and Secondary Students. Under the SHRESHTA scheme, in mode-1, during the F.Y. 2023-24, fee was reimbursed to private schools for providing school and hostel facility to 4168 SC students. Under the SHRESHTA scheme, in mode-2, during the F.Y. 2023-24, approximately 11681 number of beneficiaries benefitted under the scheme.

8.3 As per the information provided by the Department the Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure for the last three years including Budgetary Estimate for 2025-26 is as follows:-

	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			2025-26
	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESHTA) for SCs (Earlier Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for SCs)	89.00	89.00	51.01	104.65	90.00	81.59	133.07	110.00	80.85	140.00

(₹ in crore)

8.4 When asked about the reasons for under utilization of budgetary allocation made for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the steps taken to ensure that the funds allocated for 2025-26 are fully spent, the Department submitted as under:-

“In Mode-1, every year 3000 seats are allocated, but some seats could not be filled during last three years after e-Counselling and thus remained vacant. Further, as the scheme was revised in 2021-22 introducing mode-1. Since this was newly introduced, there was limited awareness about this mode among the SC students and their parents. Due to non-filling up of all seats, fund remained unutilized.

Under Mode-2, till the year 2020-21, Grant-in-Aid to the organizations for running school/hostel projects was considered as per their sanctioned strength and beneficiaries of the school/hostel project were considered in the ratio of 60:40 (SC: others). However, after revision of scheme in 2021-22, release of fund to the organizations are being considered only for SC beneficiaries subject to uploading of valid SC certificates of the beneficiaries.

This Department continuously pursues with State/UT Governments to publicize the scheme and motivate SC students to participate in the scheme. Further, the State/UT Governments were also requested to issue necessary directions to the concerned officers to facilitate issuance of SC students expeditiously. The scheme is being published through website of the Ministry and print media as well.

The Ministry has planned to hold the NETS 2025, through which admission in best private residential schools takes place, in April, 2025, so that the admission process such as declaration of result, e-Counselling and reporting of the selected students etc. is completed by 30th June, 2025. For this purpose, process has been already started in the Month of December, 2024 and Centre Board of Education (CBSE) and National Testing Agency (NTA) have been approached.

Under Mode-2, NGOs/VOs are requested to ensure that the SC certificates of beneficiaries are obtained in a timely manner and claims submitted for allowing funds to be released immediately. Further, it will be ensured that inspections are carried out on time so that grants may be released immediately.”

8.5 On being enquired about the criteria for selection of Residential Schools for providing quality education to the SC students, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment *vide* their written reply submitted that:

“The scheme was started in 1953 and known as Grant-in-Aid to Voluntarily Organizations working for SCs till 2020-21. The scheme was revised in 2021-22 and renamed as Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA). The scheme has been revised in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. During the 2021-22, one more mode was introduced under the scheme and presently the scheme is being run in following 2 modes.

Under mode-1, every year 3000 meritorious SC students are selected through NTA exam for admission in class 9th and 11th (1500 students in each class) for admission in best private residential schools affiliated to CBSE/State Boards for completing education till class 12th.

During the year 2021-22, the CBSE/State Boards affiliated schools that were recommended by the District Authorities were included under the scheme. The number of such schools was 97. However, out of these 97, only 95 schools got registered under the scheme. These schools were mainly from Aspirational Districts. During the year 2022-23, the schools that were recommended by CBSE were included under the scheme. Fresh admissions were not permitted in the schools that were registered during the year 2021-22. During the year 2023-24 both types of schools i.e. recommended by the District Authorities (schools affiliated by CBSE/State Boards) in the year 2021-22 and those recommended by CBSE during the year 2023-24 were included under the scheme.

The criteria for CBSE affiliated private residential schools, the school should be exist for at least 5 years, should have more than 75% pass percentage in class 10th and 12th in the last 3 years, and should have adequate infrastructure for admitting at least 10 additional SC students in class 9th and 11th class (together)."

8.6 As regards the number of Private Residential Schools (State/UT wise) selected for admission of SC students in class 9th and 11th in Mode-I under the SHRESHTA scheme during 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted the following details:-

S. No.	State/UTs	No. of Schools during 2021-22	No. of Schools during 2022-23	No. of Schools during 2023-24	No. of Schools during 2024-25
1.	Andhra Pradesh	14	5	8	11
2.	Bihar	6	2	5	4
3.	Chhattisgarh	6	5	7	8
4.	Gujarat	1	6	1	1
5.	Haryana	1	10	15	11
6.	Himachal Pradesh	1	8	4	4
7.	Jharkhand	6	3	4	3
8.	Karnataka	8	0	1	1
9.	Kerala	1	16	11	9
10.	Madhya Pradesh	5	8	12	11
11.	Maharashtra	4	5	5	4
12.	Orissa	17	3	6	4
13.	Punjab	0	2	3	4
14.	Rajasthan	5	27	25	31
15.	Tamil Nadu	4	21	16	14
16.	Telangana	0	1	1	0
17.	Uttar Pradesh	12	10	17	19
18.	Uttarakhand	2	6	3	5
19.	West Bengal	0	2	0	0
20.	A & N Island	0	1	0	0

21.	Puducherry	0	1	0	0
22.	Assam	1	1	0	0
23.	Tripura	1	0	0	0
	Grand Total	95	143	144	144

8.7 On being enquired whether there is any limit on the number of private residential schools to be selected each year from each State and the reasons for variation in number of schools selected from each State during the last three years, the Committee were inter-alia informed that:-

“Under the SHRESHTA scheme, there is no limit on the selection of number of private residential schools each year from each state. There has been some variation in number of schools in last 3 years depending on number of schools that fulfil the required criteria.”

8.8 On being asked about the procedure to allocate schools to the students selected through nation -wide entrance test conducted by National Testing Agency and number of students allocated to each School, the Department submitted as under:-

“Allocation of schools to be selected 3000 students is done on the basis of rank secured in the NETS exam and choice of schools filled by him/her at the time of e-Counseling process done by National Informatics Centre Service (NICS).

Before starting the e-Counselling process, consent from each school is sought regarding admission of the students as per terms and conditions of the scheme and number of maximum seats against which SC students can be admitted (class wise) in that school. Further, this information is shared with the NICS with the request to allot the seats to the school accordingly as per merit and choice of the students. Therefore number of students admitted in a particular school depends on the consent of the school and merit and choice of the students.”

8.9 On being enquired about the steps taken to ensure that the students selected for school education do not suffer linguistic, cultural, food, etc problem in School, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:

“The selected students have an option to choose the schools of their choice during e-Counselling. Allocation of students to their State domicile depends on his/her position on the merit list, choice of school exercised by the student, number of eligible schools from a particular State that have participated in the scheme and number of seats for which that school has given consent for admission.

To ensure that the SC students so admitted can catch up with the rest of the class, a Bridge Course upto 3 months duration is conducted beyond school hours after identifying

the individual academic requirements of the students for enhancing the capability of the student to adapt to the environment of the school. An amount of up to 10% of the annual fee is provided to the schools separately for this purpose.”

8.10 On being asked during the deliberation of the Committee about the reasons due to which students cannot get admission in their own State, the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment informed the Committee that:

“This whole thing for the last three years is through an open competitive exam which is conducted by NTA. As the students appear for the medical colleges based on their merit, they choose which school or medical college they have to attend. Similarly, the student or I will say the parents choose which school they want to go. Based on their merit, then they are accordingly allocated. It is done through a similar counselling process as we do for medical colleges. Based on their ranks and the number of seats in that school, options are provided. That is why it is out of choice the students go to the school they want to go. We are not forcing them to go. That is the goal. But we have noted the Committee’s concern. We will see how we can address it so that students study in the school of their home State. But this will then distort the allocation itself.

8.11 As regards to the survey conducted to check the students coming from other States to study in Residential Schools selected under SHRESTA Scheme has acclimatized in the new environment, the Committee were informed vide written reply that:-

“No survey was conducted, however, under the scheme, to ensure that the SC students so admitted can catch up with the rest of the class, a Bridge Course upto 3 months duration is conducted during odd school hours after identifying the individual academic requirements of the students. The Bridge course aims to enhance the capability of the student to easily adapt to the environment of the school. An amount of up to 10% of the annual fee is provided to the schools separately for this purpose.”

8.12 With regard to the concern of the Committee that the students should get chance to study in their own State under the Scheme, the Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment stated during deliberation that:

“We will see how best we can revise it, especially your concern is that it should be in schools where the students are from the same States. We will see how that allocation can be done.”

8.13 On being enquired about the average expenditure incurred on each student admitted for Residential School, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted vide written reply that:

“The fee covers the School Fee (including tuition fee) and Hostel Fee (including mess charges) subject to maximum limits as given below:

Class	Fee per student per annum (Rs)
9 th	1,00,000
10 th	1,10,000
11 th	1,25,000
12 th	1,35,000

The tuition fee and hostel fee is disbursed as per actuals charged by the school subject to maximum of the prescribed limit fixed for each class.

8.14 On being enquired about the proposal to enhance the fee for student per annum under Mode-I, the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“The fee per student per annum was enhanced in 2022-23. Currently, there is no such proposal is under consideration. The SHRESHTA scheme is set to be reviewed in 2025-26 for further advancements/upgradation as per modern needs/requirements.

8.15 With regard to the feedback from the students/ parents of the students on the quality of education provided by the schools, other facilities available and the existing mechanism for inspection of the schools, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted that:-

“If any complaint is received against the school, inspection is conducted by an inspection team deputed by this Department to give factual report on the complaint and also to check the functioning of school, quality of education and food and residential facilities being provided in the school. If any irregularity is found in the inspection report, the school is issued an advisory to follow the terms and conditions of SHRESHTA scheme. Under Mode-1, on receiving of complaint by the students or their parents, inspection is conducted by this Department. The last inspection was carried out in DPS Bharatpur, Rajasthan and B R Gyan Deep Senior Secondary School, Mahendragarh, Haryana. In the report, the inspection team had reported that the functioning of schools were not found satisfactory and were not compliant with the terms and condition of the SHRESHTA scheme. On this, firstly Show Cause Notice was issued to the schools. After receiving reply from the schools advisory/warning were issued to the schools.”

8.16 On being enquired about the number of NGOs selected each year under Mode II of the Scheme since its inception, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment stated in their written reply that:-

“Under Mode-2, new projects of NGOs/VOs have not been included from 2021-22. Only the NGOs/VOs whose projects that were receiving Grants-in-Aid before 2021-22 are now eligible for grants. The number of NGOs/VOs who have been receiving grants are as under:

Year	Number of NGOs received grant
2021-22	139
2022-23	116
2023-24	107

8.17 When asked about the criteria followed for allocating funds to each NGO's and how effective have been these NGO's in achieving the objectives of the Scheme under Mode II of the Scheme, the Department submitted as follows:-

The scheme has been revised in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. Under Mode-2, new projects of NGOs/VOs have not been included from 2021-22. Only the NGOs/VOs whose projects that were receiving Grants-in-Aid before 2021-22 are now eligible for grants with full filing following conditions:-

- i. The VO/NGO should be registered on the NGO DARPAN portal of NITI Aayog.
- ii. Organisation should be a reputed school chain, CSR foundation, Reputed organization etc., who are running good quality schools recognized by the State Govt. and affiliated to State/Central Boards.
- iii. The organisation should have been registered and should be working in quality school education.
- iv. The organisation shall have a properly constituted Managing Committee with its powers, duties and responsibilities clearly defined and laid down in a written Constitution. It should have an appropriate administrative structure and a duly constituted Managing/Executive Committee.
- v. The organisation is initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles.
- vi. The organization shall be a non-profit entity.
- vii. The organisation should have its own website for pro-active disclosure of the information, as far as possible.”

8.18 On being enquired about the number of NGOs assisted and number of beneficiaries in last three years under Mode-II of the Scheme, the Department submitted that:

S. No.	Years	No. of organizations assisted	No. of Beneficiaries
1	2021-22	139	19350
2	2022-23	116	14074

3	2023-24	107	11681
	Total	362	45105

The Grant is released to NGOs/VOs for running their projects on the basis of inspection report of Project Monitoring Units (PMUs) engaged by this Department. If the report is satisfactory and if requisite documents are maintained by the schools as prescribed under the scheme, grants are released on the basis of number of SC students found at the time of inspection.

In case, the report is found unsatisfactory, a clarification is sought from organizations and after receiving satisfactory reply, the project is re-inspected or an advisory is issued for improving the functioning of the school before considering further release of grants. If the reply is not found satisfactory, the Grant-in-Aid to such organizations is withheld until there is improvement, or further re-inspection, whichever is earlier.”

8.19 On being enquired about the review and monitoring mechanism adopted for effective implementation of the Scheme by the Department, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment submitted *vide* written reply that:-

“Following monitoring mechanism is in place-

- i. All Institutions are required to proactively disclose the performance on their website and also on the e-Anudaan/ online portal.
- ii. A real time Data Management Information System (MIS) for collection and dissemination of progress of the scheme has been proposed for better reporting on output outcome indicators.
- iii. Every Institution has to install closed circuit cameras from where live feed is available.
- iv. All the Institutions are regularly inspected by teams constituted for this purpose.”

8.20 On being asked about the review of the Scheme under Mode-I & II and the action taken on the review, the Committee were informed *vide* written reply that:-

“The review of the Scheme Mode-I&II was conducted, during the year 2021-22 and as per recommendation, the schools affiliated to CBSE/State Boards that were recommended by the District Authorities were included under the scheme. The number of such schools was 97 out of which 95 schools got registered under the scheme. These schools were mainly from Aspirational Districts. During the year 2021-22, out of 3000 slots, 1085 students were admitted.

Therefore, during the year 2022-23, to offer high quality education to SC students through the best CBSE Private Residential Schools, the schools that were recommended by CBSE were included under the scheme and fee per student per Annum for reimbursement to CBSE School to was revised and enhanced.

During the year 2023-24 both types of schools i.e. recommended by the District Authorities (schools affiliated by CBSE/State Boards) in the year 2021-22 and those recommended by CBSE during the year 2023-24 were included under the scheme.”

8.21 As regards, Mode-2 based on requests from organizations running such school/hostel projects, the cost norms of GIA per student was revised and enhanced as under:-

Types of Project	Residential		Non Residential		Hostel	
	Up to 2022-23	From 2023-24	Up to 2022-23	From 2023-24	Up to 2022-23	From 2023-24
Primary	35000	44000	11000	27000	16000	30000
Secondary	55000	55000	35000	35000	28000	30000

8.22 The Committee note that under SHRESHTA Scheme, the Residential Schools are selected from across the States/UTs on the recommendations of CBSE and State Boards to provide high quality residential education from class IX to XII to meritorious students from Scheduled Caste communities. The Committee find that 144 Private residential schools were selected to accommodate 3000 students on the basis of NTA examination during the year 2023-24 and 2024-25 under the scheme. The Committee note that an annual fee between ₹1,00,000 to ₹1,35,000 is granted to schools for each student taking admission in the Residential Schools. The Committee were informed that the students are getting admission in schools across the country as per their performance in NTA examination and preference made by the students. The Committee find that the students selected for admission are provided bridge course of 3 months to cover the study missed due to the time consumed in completion of the admission process. The Committee desire that the admission process should be completed in each school by the time academic session begins so that the students do not undergo any pressure due to delay in admission. The Committee feel that the fee fixed for each student is not sufficient to meet boarding, tuition fee expenses and other infrastructure required to provide top class education to the students. Therefore, there is a need to have inbuilt mechanism for review and revision of the fee in order to maintain standards of top class education. The Committee during the study visit to one of the schools under SHRESHTA,

while interacting with the students who are coming from other States, observed that it is difficult for a school student to cope up with different socio-cultural and linguistic environment. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Department may examine the entire process to explore the possibility that a student get admission in their domicile State. Hence, the Department should evolve a mechanism where a student is provided admission in a Top Class Residential Schools selected in their domicile State. In view of the foregoing, the Committee recommend that the Department would revise the Scheme at the earliest and apprise the Committee in this regard.

New Delhi
12 March, 2025
21 Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

SHRI P.C MOHAN
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Social
Justice and Empowerment

MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2024-25) (DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT) HELD ON FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2025

The Committee met from 1400 hrs. to 1540 hrs. in Committee Room No. '2', Parliament House Annexe Extension Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI P.C. MOHAN - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Bhasker Murlidhar Bhagare
3. Smt. Vijaylakshmi Devi
4. Shri Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar
5. Smt. Bag Mitali
6. Shri Matheswaran V.S
7. Shri Sasikanth Senthil
8. Shri Anoop Pradhan Valmiki

Rajya Sabha

9. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
10. Shri Narayan Koragappa
11. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Mamta Kemwal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Krishendra Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

WITNESSES

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT)

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Amit Yadav | Secretary |
| 2. | Ms. Debolina Thakur | Joint Secretary & FA |
| 3. | Ms. Monali P. Dhakate | Joint Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. Radhika Chakravarthy B | Joint Secretary |
| 5. | Shri Shailendra Kumar | Joint Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary and other officers representing the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to the sitting of the Committee convened to discuss the Demands for Grants for 2025-26. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson expressed concern over the recurring issue of underutilization of funds across various schemes and the Department's inability to fully utilize the Revised Estimates (RE) in the past three years. He sought clarification on the steps being taken to ensure maximum fund utilization in 2025-26.

3. The Chairperson then drew attention of the representatives of the Department to Direction 55 (1) of the 'Directions by the Speaker of Lok Sabha' about maintaining confidentiality of the proceedings of the Committee until the report is presented to the House. Thereupon, Chairperson requested the Secretary to introduce other officers and to brief the Committee on the various schemes of the Department.

4. Accordingly, Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment briefed the Committee through a power point presentation highlighting the performance of the Department during the financial year 2024-25 and proposals for financial year.

5. The Committee, thereafter, inter alia deliberated on the following issues:

- i. Budgetary allocation, expenditure and shortfall in expenditure etc. for the financial year 2024-25 and budgetary estimation regarding financial 2025-26;
- ii. Review of the performance of Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs and Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SRESHTA);

- iii. Performance of the Vanchit Ikai Samoooh Aur Vargon KI Arthik Sahayata (Visvas) Yojana For SCs And OBCs;
- iv. Venture Capital Fund to promote entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes;
- v. Implementation status of “PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBCs and Others (PM-YASASVI)” for OBC, EBC and DNT students and;
- vi. Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana,

6. The Chairperson then thanked the Secretary and other representatives of the Department for providing valuable information on the subject and also asked the Secretary to furnish written replies on the issues that remained unanswered during the sitting.

A copy of the verbatim proceedings of the sitting has been kept on record.

The witnesses then withdrew.

(The Committee then adjourned)

MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2024-25) HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 2025.

The Committee met from 1030 hrs. to 1100 hrs. in Chairperson's Chamber, Room No. 113, E-PHA, Block 'B', Extension Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI P.C. MOHAN - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Bhaskar Murlidhar Bhagare
3. Smt. Vijaylakshmi Devi
4. Shri Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar
5. Km.Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi
6. Shri Chintamani Maharaj
7. Shri Murari Lal Meena
8. Shri Godam Nagesh
9. Shri Gajendra Singh Patel
10. Shri Rajkumar Roat
11. Adv. Priya Saroj
12. Shri Anoop Pradhan Valmiki
13. Dr. Lata Wankhede

Rajya Sabha

14. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
15. Shri Narayana Koragappa
16. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam
17. Shri Ramji
18. Shri Rameswar Teli
19. Smt. P. T. Usha
20. Shri Abdul Wahab
21. Shri Niranjana Bishi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Mamta Kemwal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Krishendra Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt the following draft Reports:

(i) Draft Report on 'Demands for Grants for the year 2025-26' pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

(ii) XX XX XX XX

3. The Chairperson then requested the Members to give their suggestions, if any, on the draft Reports. The Reports were adopted by the Committee without any modifications.

4. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and to present the same to both the Houses during the ensuing session.

The Committee then adjourned.

XX Does not pertain to this Report

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl.No	Para No.	Observations/ Recommendations
1.	2.11	<p>The Committee find that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment spent ₹6,410.09 crore and ₹7,830.26 crore on various Scholarships and other educational schemes in 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively. Similarly, in the year 2024-25, the Department has spent ₹3,403.51 crore on Educational Scholarship Schemes till February, 2025. The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Department in making education accessible to the deprived sections of the Society through various Schemes. The Committee believe that for the success of any educational scheme, other factors are also significant such as cost of education, availability of good Government Schools/Colleges and teaching staff for its effective implementation. The Committee are of the opinion that the annual scholarship granted to a student for pursuing education is not sufficient to meet the present-day expenditure required to get proper and quality education. The Committee would, therefore, like the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment to review the annual scholarship amount granted to each student pursuing various courses alongwith the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to achieve the envisaged objectives of the various scholarship schemes of the Department. The Committee would like to recommend that the quantum of Scholarship granted to a student under each Scheme should be periodically reviewed to contain the inflation so that the Scheme is more fruitful.</p>
2.	2.12	<p>The Committee find that about 72.5 per cent of the Budgetary allocation of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment is utilized on the Scholarships and other</p>

		<p>Educational Schemes of the Department. Keeping in view huge mandate of the Department to cater the needs of various marginalized sections including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, Economically Weaker sections, Senior Citizens, Transgenders, victims of substance abuse through various welfare schemes, the Committee urge that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment should focus on other schemes also. For this purpose, if additional funds are required, they may seek more budgetary allocations. Further, the Committee find that there are frequent changes in the guidelines of various Schemes such as PM-AJAY, SHRESHTA, NAMASTE, PM-VISVAS etc. The Committee are of the view that the guidelines of any Scheme should be properly examined by seeking suggestions from all the stakeholders before they are finalized. In this regard, the Committee expect that the Department will find out the solution by taking into confidence the State Governments and also consider stepping up the budgetary allocation in future so that the Schemes other than educational schemes become meaningful for the targeted sections of the society..</p>
3.	2.13	<p>The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has been able to implement the SNA system for flow of funds across the country. The Committee find that the Department is organizing ‘Chintan Shivir’, meetings with the State Governments and other Implementing Agencies so that the complete proposals and Utilization Certificates are timely submitted to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for timely release of funds. The Department has also been able to persuade some State Governments to return the unspent funds lying with their SNA Accounts. However, there are certain States such as Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar</p>

		<p>Pradesh, etc. have failed in returning the unspent balance in their SNA Accounts. The Committee are satisfied with the provisions contained in the SNA System and expect that the system will certainly help the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in maximizing the use of funds allocated to the Department. Since some of the State Governments are yet to surrender the unutilized amount, they may be asked to surrender it immediately so that the next installment is released to them and the marginalized people for whom these Schemes have been framed do not suffer for the failure of the State Government in completing the formalities required from them. The Committee would also like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to consider incentivizing those State Governments that are completing all the formalities in time so that the defaulting States also make sincere efforts to implement the Schemes of the Government of India.</p>
4.	2.14	<p>The Committee are well aware that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is spending large amount of budgetary allocation in Scholarship Schemes. The Committee have found that year after year the scholarship amount released to the eligible students spills over to the next academic year as the applications from State Governments are received up to the months of February and March. The Committee are of the view that current system is required to be reviewed as the students should get scholarship within the same academic year so that the education of the student is not disrupted for want of money. The Committee would like the Department to give all the handholding support to the State Governments to start the process early so that the requisite formalities are completed in time. The Committee expect that the Department should make all out efforts to sensitize the State Governments and Other Implementing agencies on this aspect and get the issue of last-minute</p>

		spending resolved.
5.	3.13	<p>The Committee note that the Vanchit Ikai Samooch Aur Vargon Ki Arthik Sahayata (VISVAS) Yojana for SC and OBCs was launched on a pilot basis in 2020-21 to support livelihood activities for marginalized SC and OBC with a 5 per cent interest subvention on income-generating loans upto ₹ 2 lakhs for individuals and ₹4 lakhs for Self-Help Groups(SHG). However, the actual expenditure was 'nil' in 2022-23 and 2023-24 as the Scheme was not approved for 2022-23. Since the new guidelines for the Scheme were issued on 14.06.2024, the actual expenditure of ₹1.50 crore and ₹1.00 crore could only be made out of allocated funds of ₹11.49 crore and ₹11.95 crore under the VISVAS Scheme for SCs and OBCs, respectively in 2024-25 (till February,2025). The Committee are not able to comprehend the reasons due to which the Scheme could not take off till 2024-25 and the Department took almost two years in finalizing the guidelines even after the third-party evaluation report was submitted in February, 2022. The Committee are of the opinion that any new Scheme should be launched after exhaustive consultations with all the State Governments, stakeholders, banks and other implementing agencies. The Committee desire that some mechanism should be evolved for the periodic review of Schemes so that the flaws are noticed and the requisite changes are made in the guidelines to plug the loopholes found during the implementation. The Committee would like to be informed of the instructions issued in this regard.</p>
6.	3.14	<p>The Committee find that ₹251 crore has been earmarked with the aim of benefitting 15 lakh beneficiaries during 2024-25 and 2025-26 under the Scheme. The Committee also find from the figures given by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment that financial assistance of only ₹3.00 crore</p>

		<p>benefitting 47,809 OBC individuals and ₹4.452 crore benefitting 44,006 SC individuals have been provided in 2024-25. The Committee find that even after the issuance of revised guidelines, the Scheme is not attracting targeted beneficiaries. The Committee believe that the target of 15 lakh beneficiary fixed for 2024-25 and 2025-26 is very difficult to be achieved. The Committee, therefore, desire that the reasons due to which Scheme is not picking up should be identified. The initiatives taken by the Department to promote the Scheme may yield desired results if concerted efforts by the Department including NSFDC, NBCFDC, NSKFDC and Banks are made to make the Scheme successful. Since the Scheme is to be initially implemented in 2024-25 and 2025-26, the Committee are concerned about the tenure of the Scheme and desire that the Department should consider extending the tenure of the Scheme as the tenure of two years is too less for any Scheme to be successful.</p>
7.	4.14	<p>The Committee note that the Scheme of Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBCs were launched in 2015 and 2019 respectively with a Corpus of ₹750 crore and ₹180.92 crore. The Committee find that ₹571.60 crore to 234 companies belonging to Scheduled Caste Entrepreneurs and ₹112.35 crore to 22 companies belonging to Backward Classes have been sanctioned. The Committee find that the Scheme will be discontinued by 31st March, 2025. The Committee also find from the Report of the evaluation study conducted by IIPA that the VCF-SC is a distinct Scheme and needs continuation. The Committee feel that the suggestions made in the Evaluation study such as, delays in security clearances, better post loan support, dissemination about the Scheme, grievance redressal mechanism, etc should have been addressed instead of discontinuing the Scheme. Since the Scheme is proposed to be discontinued by 31st March, 2025,</p>

		<p>the Committee expect that the sanctioned loan will be disbursed to the entrepreneurs in full as out of ₹558.09 crore sanctioned to 143 companies upto December, 2024 under VCF-SC only ₹393.87 crore has been sanctioned. Similarly, under VCF-BC out of ₹94.08 crore sanctioned to 18 companies upto December, 2024 only ₹51.50 crore has been disbursed. The Committee would also like to be informed of the proposals received after December, 2024 upto 31st March, 2025 and the action taken on these proposals.</p>
8.	4.15	<p>The Venture Capital Fund for SCs and OBC will be discontinued after 31st March, 2025 and the Department is in the process of formulating a new Venture Capital Fund for deprived and marginalized sections. The Committee hope that the observations made by IIPA in the evaluation study may also be considered before finalizing the new Scheme and take all the necessary steps to make it effective so that it is not required to revise the Scheme frequently. The Committee would like the Department to take requisite action for early finalization of the new Scheme with detailed guidelines for all the implementing agencies. The Committee may like to be apprised of the current status and the time by which the new Scheme is likely to be launched.</p>
9.	5.12	<p>The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampana Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) for SC, OBC and others since 2020-21. It is found that during the year 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Department was able to spend ₹14.94 crore out of RE of ₹84.00 crore, ₹58.34 crore out of RE of ₹140.00 crore respectively. Further, the Department has not been able to spend even a single rupee in 2024-25 till February, 2025 out of Revised Estimate of ₹80.00 crore as empanelment of Training Institutes was delayed. The Committee are</p>

		<p>concerned with the socio-economic development of SC, OBC and others, hence, believe that any slackness on behalf of the concerned authorities would defeat the purpose of the Scheme. The Committee are of the opinion that the Schemes instituted with the noble objectives cannot be left at the mercy of the concerned authorities, particularly when the Government of India is making all efforts for the socio-economic development of the targeted communities by allocating huge funds. The Committee would therefore, like to recommend that in future all necessary steps are taken to ensure that the empanelment of Training Institutes, etc. is not delayed and the necessary formalities are timely completed. The Committee would like the Department to take necessary measures so that the targets fixed are achieved. The Committee would also like the Department to enhance the targets keeping into consideration the population of these categories i.e., SC, OBC and others so that the maximum people can take benefit of the Scheme.</p>
10.	5.13	<p>The Committee have found that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has sent a proposal to Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to merge the PM-DAKSH Scheme with the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) Scheme in order to improve efficiency and optimize public expenditure as the PM-DAKSH Scheme largely overlaps with the objectives and structure of PMKVY. The Committee urge that as the proposal has been sent recently, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment may ensure that the beneficiary targeted for 2025-26 are not affected. The Committee may like to be apprised of the status of the proposals received and also of the implementation of the Scheme in 2025-26.</p>

11.	6.17	<p>The Committee note that the Department implements an Umbrella Scheme of SHREYAS consisting of 4 sub-schemes viz. National fellowship for SCs, National Overseas Scholarship for SCs, Top Class Education for SCs and Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs. On the scrutiny of the Budgetary Allocation made for the scheme in 2024-25, it is found that the Department was not able to utilize budgetary allocation fully on any of the four sub-schemes. The Committee are made to understand that proposals of ₹3.00 crore for National Overseas Scholarship Scheme and ₹55.00 crore under National Fellowship for SCs are expected to be received by 31 March, 2025. The Committee also found that the proposal for ₹52.46 crore under Top Class Education for SCs and ₹18.00 crore under National Fellowship for SCs are pending in the Department for approval. The Committee find that proposals to the tune of ₹70.46 crore are pending for approval with the Department as late as February, 2025 and proposals to the tune of ₹93.00 crore under various sub-schemes are expected by 31 March, 2025. The Committee, therefore, recommend that Department should issue instructions to the Institutions/ Organisations to submit the complete proposals within the given time frame to avoid any delay in future. With regard to the proposals of 2024-25 pending with the Department for approval and also the proposals expected by 31 March 2025, the Department may take necessary action for early approval so that funds allocated under this Scheme is utilized fully in this Financial Year. The Committee would like to be apprised in this regard.</p>
12.	6.18	<p>6.18 The Committee find that the proposals under Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs were delayed in 2024-25 due to late commencement of courses in the academic year 2023-24 and some proposals are also expected to be received in the month of February/ March, 2025. The Committee also note that the Department have revised the guidelines from the selection year 2023-24 to achieve the target. However, the Memorandum of Understanding required to be signed with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation by all the Central Universities to become</p>

		<p>part of the Scheme has been signed by 19 out of 55 Central Universities. The Committee would therefore like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to ensure that the MOUs is signed by the remaining Central Universities as early as possible so that the economically disadvantaged Scheduled Caste and other Backward Classes candidates are not deprived from availing benefits of the Scheme. The Committee also desire that the empanelled Central Universities may be persuaded to timely commence the classes without any further delay and take necessary measures to expeditiously release the funds to them.</p>
13.	6.19	<p>6.19 The Committee find that during the period 2022-23 to 2024-25 out of 1881 applications received for National Overseas Scholarship, 629 applications were complete and 325 candidates were selected for the Scholarship. Keeping into consideration the number of aspiring candidates for National Overseas Scholarship, the Committee feel that there is a urgent need to increase the number of 125 slots fixed under the Scholarship Scheme each year. The Committee are of the strong opinion that the income eligibility criteria fixed for the Scholarship Schemes deprives many meritorious candidates from availing the benefits of the Scheme. The Committee, therefore, desire that the income fixed for making candidate eligible for scholarship needs to be reviewed so that more candidates are covered under the Scheme.</p>
14.	6.20	<p>6.20 The Committee note that an evaluation study was conducted in 2020-21 for Top Class Education Scheme</p>

		<p>for SC and in 2019-20 for National Overseas Scholarship Scheme. The Committee find that the Department has again initiated the process of conducting the evaluation study for all the four sub-schemes under the SHREYAS for SCs for its continuation in the upcoming 16th Financial cycle commencing in 2026-27. Since the Evaluation process has begun, the Committee would like the Department to take suggestions from all the stakeholders while evaluating all the Schemes so that the difficulties faced by them in implementing the Scheme are taken care of while framing the new guidelines. The Committee also desire that the necessary measures may be taken for timely completion of the evaluation process and the Report on Evaluation Study should be ready before the commencement of financial year 2026-27 to avoid any disruption in continuation of the Scheme.</p>
15.	7.23	<p>The Committee note that the PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBC and others (PM-YASASVI) implemented for the educational empowerment consists of five Schemes viz, Pre-Matric, Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, Top Class School, Top Class College education and Construction of Hostel for OBC boys and girls. The Committee find that during the year 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 the Department spent ₹1388.82 crore, ₹1316.65 crore and ₹383.12 crore out of revised allocation of ₹1581.00 crore, ₹1603.00 crore and ₹1380.63 crore respectively under the Scheme. The Committee also find that the Department was not able to spend the allocated budget</p>

		<p>fully during these years as the Department did not either receive proposals from some States/UTs or incomplete proposals were received from some States/UTs. Further, Top Class Education in schools/ college Schemes are since being implemented from 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively, hence, they are taking time to stabilize for its optimum performance. The Committee appreciate the Department for taking necessary measures such as organizing National Conference/ Regional Conference, setting up of Project Monitoring Units and expect that the measures taken will improve the performance of PM-YASASVI and the situation of 2024-25 where Department could spend only ₹383.12 crore out of Revised Estimate of ₹1380.63 crore will not be repeated in 2025-26. The Committee desire that the measures taken should be scrupulously followed and the requisite steps may be taken to ensure that the Top Class School/ College Education Schemes stabilize at the earliest and the performance is optimized as sufficient time has passed since these Schemes came into existence.</p>
16.	7.24	<p>The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment provides giving grant to State Governments and UT Administrations and the Institutions of repute to construct hostels for OBC Boys and Girls. The Committee find that out of 1095 hostels sanctioned by the Department, the construction of only 848 have completed and 247 are still incomplete due to Administrative hurdles, procurement and contracting issues, design and structural approvals, etc. The Committee desire that the 18 months period stipulated</p>

		<p>for constructions of a hostel should be strictly complied by the respective Institutions, State Governments and UT Administration and any hindrance in the construction activity should be resolved within the least possible time so that the construction work do not exceed the prescribed time period. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Project Monitoring Units set up to monitor Projects may be directed to regularly monitor the construction work and take necessary steps to settle the issues hampering the construction work.</p>
17.	8.22	<p>The Committee note that under SHRESHTA Scheme, the Residential Schools are selected from across the States/UTs on the recommendations of CBSE and State Boards to provide high quality residential education from class IX to XII to meritorious students from Scheduled Caste communities. The Committee find that 144 Private residential schools were selected to accommodate 3000 students on the basis of NTA examination during the year 2023-24 and 2024-25 under the scheme. The Committee note that an annual fee between ₹1,00,000 to ₹1,35,000 is granted to schools for each student taking admission in the Residential Schools. The Committee were informed that the students are getting admission in schools across the country as per their performance in NTA examination and preference made by the students. The Committee find that the students selected for admission are provided bridge course of 3 months to cover the study missed due to the time consumed in completion of the admission process. The Committee desire that the</p>

		<p>admission process should be completed in each school by the time academic session begins so that the students do not undergo any pressure due to delay in admission. The Committee feel that the fee fixed for each student is not sufficient to meet boarding, tuition fee expenses and other infrastructure required to provide top class education to the students. Therefore, there is a need to have inbuilt mechanism for review and revision of the fee in order to maintain standards of top class education. The Committee during the study visit to one of the schools under SHRESHTA, while interacting with the students who are coming from other States, observed that it is difficult for a school student to cope up with different socio-cultural and linguistic environment. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Department may examine the entire process to explore the possibility that a student get admission in their domicile State. Hence, the Department should evolve a mechanism where a student is provided admission in a Top Class Residential Schools selected in their domicile State. In view of the foregoing, the Committee recommend that the Department would revise the Scheme at the earliest and apprise the Committee in this regard.</p>
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