

EMPOWERMENT

(2024-25)

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the First Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

August, 2025/ Shravana, 1947 (Saka)

TWELFTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(2024-25)

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

**Action taken by the Government on the
Observations/Recommendations contained in the First Report
(Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social
Justice and Empowerment)**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 21.08.2025

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 21.08.2025



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

August, 2025/ Shravana, 1947 (Saka)

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**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
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Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
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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 |
| 3. | Ms. Melody Vungthiansiam | - | Committee Officer |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Twelfth Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the First Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

2. The First Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2024. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) have furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 30.06.2025. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 19.08.2025.

3. An analysis of the Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the First Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) is given in Appendix.

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

**NEW DELHI;
19th August, 2025
28 Shravana, 1947 (Saka)**

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

CHAPTER-I

REPORT

The Report deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their First Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment).

1.2. The First Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2024. It contained 15 observations/recommendations. Action Taken Replies of Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been examined and are categorized as under: -

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been **(Total: 8, Chapter: II)** accepted by the Government:-

**Rec. Para No. 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 3.12, 3.13
8.11, 9.23 and 10.13**

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the **(Total: 2, Chapter: III)** Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply: -

Rec. Para No. 2.11 and 11.10

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of **(Total: 3, Chapter: IV)** which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration: -

Rec. Para No. 4.28, 5.9 and 6.13

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of **(Total: 2, Chapter: V)** which replies of the Government are interim in nature: -

Rec. Para No. 7.9 and 9.22

1.3. The Committee desire that action taken notes on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than three months of the presentation of this Report.

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

A. SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ACHIEVERS SCHEME (SHREYAS) FOR SCs

Recommendation (Para No.4.28)

1.5. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Scholarship for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs is the Umbrella Scheme which has four existing sub-Schemes viz. National Fellowships for SCs, National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SCs, Top Class Education Scheme for SCs and Free Coaching Scheme for SC and OBC students. The Committee note that the budgetary allocation for 2022-23 and 2023-24 was less in comparison to 2021-22 but the actual expenditure has been constantly increasing since 2021-22, as it was ₹271.21 crore, ₹293.77 crore and ₹363.31crore in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively. The Committee find that the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBC is not available on the National Scholarship Portal and onboarding of the Scheme on the portal is under consideration. The Committee also find that the Scheme is being implemented by Dr Ambedkar Foundation through empanelled Central Universities after revision of the Scheme in 2023-24 and only 19 Central Universities have signed the MOU with the Foundation. The Committee desire that the Department should take necessary steps to on-board the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs on National Scholarship Portal and more Central Universities should be empanelled so that a large number of students of SC and OBC communities are able to appear in competitive and entrance examinations for obtaining jobs in Public/Private Sector as well as to secure admission in reputed higher educational institutions.”

1.6. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“Continuous follow-up is done with all 56 Central Universities. However, as on date, only 19 Central Universities have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and become part of the Scheme. The Department will continue its efforts for on-boarding more Central Universities.”

1.7. The Committee, while acknowledging the steady increase in the actual expenditure over the last three years under the Scholarship for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS), had observed that the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs is not available on the National Scholarship Portal. Following the revision of SHREYAS Scheme in 2023-24, the Committee found that the Scheme is being implemented by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation through empanelled Central Universities and 19 Central Universities have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Foundation. The Ministry have informed that while continuous follow-up is being done with all 56 Central Universities, only 19 Central Universities have signed MoU with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation so far. In order to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the SHREYAS scheme aimed at benefiting a larger number of students from SC and OBC communities, the Committee reiterate that the Department should expedite the process of on-boarding the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs on the National Scholarship Portal. Further, the Committee desire that the Department should strive to empanel remaining Central Universities with the Ambedkar Foundation as early as possible, thereby, expanding its reach to enable large number of students preparing for competitive examinations and securing admission in reputed higher educational institutions can take advantage of the Scheme.

B. PRADHAN MANTRI ANUSUCHIT JAATI ABHYUDAY YOJANA (PM-AJAY)

Recommendation (Para No.5.9)

1.8. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Committee note that Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) is an Umbrella scheme wherein 3 centrally sponsored scheme, namely, Pradhan Mantri Aardra Gram Yojana (PM-AJAY), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) have been merged in 2021-22 due to similarity in nature. The Committee find that since 2021-22, 6282 villages in the country have been declared Aardra Grams, Rs.1023 crore provided to 184815

beneficiaries under GIA component and Rs. 114.23 crore sanctioned for 44 hostels covering 4985 beneficiaries. The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for taking several steps for effective implementation of the Scheme. The Committee are however, slightly worried with the pace of actual expenditure incurred during 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Committee feel that the gap between Budgetary Estimate and Actual Expenditure should be narrowed down so that the objectives of the Scheme are fully achieved. The State Governments should be guided to take necessary steps so that more and more villages are declared Adarsh Grams in their States as it has happened in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, the construction of hostels in educational institutions should also be prioritized as large numbers of students belonging to SC community are not able to join good educational institution due to limited availability of hostels.”

1.9. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“The Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY), consists of three components namely Adarsh Gram, Grants in Aid to State/District level Projects and Hostel component. The scheme is 100 % centrally sponsored and being implemented by the State Government/UT Administration. The expenditure incurred during last two years has been relatively low due to the introduction of the SNA system which requires States/UTs to complete the necessary mapping, causing a procedural delay. Additionally, pending Utilization Certificates and fewer proposals for Hostels and non-submission of Grants-in-aid perspective plans by some States contributed to reduced expenditure. To address this, the Department holds monthly review meetings and maintains regular communication with States/UTs to improve implementation, clear SNA balances, and ensure timely submission of UCs for smooth fund release. Furthermore, Ministry officials visit villages to oversee the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) so that declaration of Adarsh Gram is expedited by the State Governments. This Department is implementing Hostel component of PM-AJAY which aims to increase literacy and encourage enrolment of SCs students in schools and higher educational institutions by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, especially in the SC dominated blocks and elsewhere in India.

With efforts and follow-up, as compared to earlier years during the FY 2024-25, the utilisation was Rs 736 Crore as against Rs 471 Crore in FY 2023-24 which is an increase of 56%. The Department will ensure higher utilisation in the next financial year.”

1.10. While appreciating the efforts taken by the Department for effective implementation of PM-AJAY Scheme, the Committee highlighted the need for narrowing the gap between the Budgetary Estimates and the Actual Expenditure under the Scheme. The Committee further opined the need for guiding the State Governments towards more villages being declared Adarsh Grams and to prioritize the construction of hostels in educational institutions. The Department have informed that low expenditure in the last two years were due to introduction of the SNA system, pending Utilization Certificates, fewer proposal for Hostels and non-submission of Grants-in-aid perspective plans by some States. On the implementation of the hostel component of PM-AJAY, the Department have informed that they are providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, especially in SC dominated blocks. The Committee are of the view that the Department should take necessary measures to ensure that the reasons affecting utilization of funds do not anymore hinder the expenditure and improve further to maximise utilization of funds. Further, in order to ensure timely implementation and maximum benefit to SC communities, the Committee reiterate the need for prioritizing the construction of hostels in educational institutions and guiding the State Governments lagging behind in declaration of villages as Adarsh Grams so that the benefit of the Scheme reaches large number of villages in the country.

C. Enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

Recommendation (Para No.6.13)

1.11. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“As abolition of untouchability is enshrined in the Constitution of India, the Government of India has taken several measures such as enactment of Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Committee note that a centrally sponsored scheme was introduced to financially assist the States/UTs for strengthening the machinery for Implementation of these Acts.

The Committee find that the Central assistance of ₹535.70 crore was released to various States during the year 2023-24 for functioning and strengthening of the SC/ST Protection Cell and Special Police Stations, strengthening and enforcement of judicial machinery, relief and rehabilitation of atrocity victims, incentive for inter-caste marriages and awareness generation and publicity. In this regard, the Committee have found that maximum financial assistance has been released to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Bihar during the year 2023-24. However, the Committee have observed that several States have not been able to set up the requisite system to effectively implement the provisions contained in the Acts and to deal with the cases of atrocities against SCs. The Committee were also made to understand that there is no financial constraints with the Government of India, and they are ready to release more funds to the States for the establishment of the machinery required for effective implementation of the Acts. The Committee are of the opinion that the issue of atrocities against the persons belonging to Scheduled castes should be sincerely tackled by the State Governments. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all the State Governments should be pursued by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to establish and strengthen the machinery required for enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, effectively."

1.12. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

"The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The objective of the Scheme is to financially assist the States/UTs towards effective implementation of various provisions of these Acts. The Department releases funds to States/UTs only on the basis of their proposals.

To ensure that the beneficiaries are not deprived besides monitoring through the periodic progress reports Department is organizing conferences of State Social Welfare Ministers, State Welfare Secretaries, regular capacity building programmes, field visits by the officers of the Department. A committee under the chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Minister for the Social Justice & Empowerment exists to review the effective implementation of these Acts and the Scheme, where all States/UTs participate.

Regional meetings are being conducted by the Department to review the implementation of these Acts and the scheme, wherein region-wise the SC/ST Development/Social Welfare Department of the 5-8 States/UTs are being called for the review of the implementation of these Acts and the scheme and the State-wise review of the mechanisms set up by the States and their further

requirement as per the provisions made in the Acts, has been made a permanent agenda of the meeting. These matter are discussed in the meetings with the States/UTs to emphasize the need to set up the requisite systems as prescribed in the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 and the rules framed there under for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.”

1.13. Noting that a centrally sponsored scheme was introduced to financially assist the States/UTs for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Committee found that a central assistance of ₹535.70 crore was released during 2023-24 to various States. The Committee had observed that while several States were unable to set up the requisite system for implementation of these Acts, maximum financial assistance had been released to a cluster of five States in Central India. Given that there were no financial constraints with the Government in releasing funds under these Acts, the Committee were of the opinion that the atrocities against SCs should be sincerely tackled by the Department by establishing and strengthening the machinery for enforcement of these Acts. The Department have informed that funds are released to States/UTs on the basis of their proposals. For effective implementation of the provisions of the Acts, the Department in their reply have cited various measures taken by them including periodic progress monitoring, organizing conferences, capacity building programmes, field visits and regional meetings for review of the implementation of these Acts. The Committee laud the efforts made by the Department towards implementation of these Acts aimed at reducing atrocities against the SC community. However, the Committee feel that the Department while conducting State-wise reviews should focus on those States which are facing challenges in setting up the machinery for enforcement of these Acts and ensure that the funds meant for curbing offences of untouchability and atrocities against SCs and STs are not concentrated in a few States. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment should engage with each of the State Governments to create and enhance the necessary mechanisms required for enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act,

1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 so that the requisite machinery is established in each State at the earliest.

D. SCHEME OF RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL IN TARGETED AREA (SRESHTA) FOR SC

Recommendation (Para No.7.9)

1.14. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Committee note that the Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted area (SRESHTA) for SCs came into existence in 2021-22 in place of Grants-in-aid to Voluntary and Other Organizations working for Scheduled Caste to provide environment for Socio-economic upliftment and overall development of Scheduled Castes. The Committee find that the Scheme is operated in two modes, as per the established norms, every year 3000 meritorious SC students (1500 for IXth class and 1500 for Xth Class) are selected for admission in the best private residential schools under Mode-I whereas under Mode-II schools/hostels run by VOs/NGOs are provided Grants-In-aid for 13500 SC Students per year. The Committee are happy to note that annual allocation of ₹2428.00 crore made for 2024-25 is much higher in comparison to the allocation of ₹2371.00 crore made in 2023-24 and ₹2364.00 crore made in 2022-23 but the quantum of actual expenditure for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 is little discouraging for the Committee. Further, only 2405 students were selected under Mode-I in 2022-23 against 3000 Students fixed for selection. The Committee also note that large number of VOs/NGOs from Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh received Grants-in-aid under Mode-II from 2020-21 to 2023-24 but many States did not receive any grant. The Committee believe that the SRESHTA Scheme is crucial for the SC students to get proper education from the best schools in the country. Hence, the Committee desire that the Scheme should be well publicized so that large number of students get the benefit of the scheme. Since, the Scheme under Mode-II appears to be popular in some States only, the Committee would like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to take suitable steps to increase awareness about the Scheme in the country to increase the footprints of the Scheme among the SC students. The Committee hope necessary action will be taken by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in this regard”.

1.15. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“This Department has taken several measures like requesting State/UT Governments to publicize the scheme in the Schools & motivate SC students to participate in the SHRESHTA scheme. Further, the State/UT Governments were also requested to issue necessary directions to the concerned officers to facilitate the SC students for obtaining their SC certificates at the earliest. The scheme is being published through website of the Ministry and print media as well. The Department has planned that national-level entrance exam in 2025 through which admission in best private residential schools takes place earlier, so that all the admission process such as declaration of result, e-counselling and reporting of the selected students etc. are completed by 30th June, 2025 to enable filling up all the 3000 seats.”

1.16. The Committee had pointed out that the actual expenditure under the SRESHTA Scheme had been low during the last three consecutive years from 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 and that out of a fixed number of 3000 students to be selected under Mode-I in 2023-24, only 2405 students had been selected. The Committee had desired that the Scheme should be well publicized so that a larger number of students would benefit from the SRESHTA Scheme. The Ministry in their action taken reply have informed that a national-level entrance exam is being planned in 2025 through which the entire process of selection of students would be completed by 30th June, 2025 to enable filling up all 3000 seats. The Committee expect that the said process is followed through by the Ministry and reiterate that the number of students fixed for selection in Mode-I *i.e.* 3000 students be categorically filled. Further, in order to identify the reasons for the shortfall in the number of selected students and underutilization of funds under the Scheme, a thorough review may be conducted on the implementation of the Scheme and a strategy may be developed for increasing participation from States/UTs that have not benefitted from the Scheme so far. The Committee may be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

E. NATIONAL ACTION FOR MECHANISED SANITATION ECOSYSTEM (NAMASTE)

Recommendation (Para No.9.22)

1.17. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem Scheme (NAMASTE) was launched in July, 2023 to formalize the Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and to ensure safety and dignity of sanitation workers in Urban India. It is implemented in convergence amongst key stakeholders including Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation and Ministry of skill Development and Entrepreneurship. As per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, there are likely to be one lakh Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) in the country. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs are required to converge for interventions such as profiling of SSWs through MIS portal, nomination of Responsible Sanitation Authority, setting up of Emergency Response Sanitation Unit, etc. In view of the involvement of several Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations, the Committee are of the opinion that for the success of the NAMASTE, it is important that there is proper coordination amongst them so that the responsibilities entrusted over them are carried out smoothly. Unless all the SSWs are validated, they would be deprived from the benefits of the Scheme. The Committee find that out of 43961 profiled SSWs, 37407 SSWs have been validated by the concerned Urban Local Bodies. The Committee, therefore, desire that all the SSWs should be profiled and validated urgently. Further, the pace of the distribution of PPE Kits, Safety devices and Ayushman Bharat Cards to SSWs is required to be increased as only 16741 PPE Kits, 42 Safety Devices and 13412 Ayushman Bharat Cards have been provided to them. The Committee expect that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment would take all necessary steps for the welfare of the SSWs and effective Implementation of NAMASTE in a time bound manner.”

1.18. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) has been launched in July, 2023 with aim to ensure safety and dignity of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). Profiling of SSWs could be started in last week of December, 2024 and is being done continuously in coordination with States/UTs. Profiling has been carried out in all States / UTs. Tamil Nadu and Odisha have their own schemes and are profiling SSWs. The details of validated SSWs by Tamil Nadu and Odisha will be merged with details of validated SSWs.

As on 13.04.2025, out of 73,289 profiled SSWs, 69,231 SSWs have been validated by the concerned Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). 45,871 PPE kits for

SSWs have been delivered to States / Uts. 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) have been supplied. Ayushman cards have been made available to 16,962 beneficiaries. Support of Urban Local bodies, National Health Authority (NHA), Common Service Centre (CSC) etc. Is being sought to expedite the process for issuance of Ayushman Cards. Responsible Sanitation Authorities (RSA) have been appointed in 557 Districts. ERSUs have been established in 576 ULBs. Helpline number including 14420 has been made operational in 290 ERSUs. 961 workshops have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks in Municipal Corporation/ Municipality/ Nagar Palika and other such organizations engaging Sewer and septic tank cleaning workers. Further, the recommendation of the Committee is noted for strict compliance.”

1.19. The Committee had desired in their original Report that all Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) should be profiled and validated urgently as only 43961 SSWs had been profiled and 37407 SSWs had been validated by Urban Local Bodies out of a probable one lakh Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). The Committee also highlighted the need for increase in the pace of distribution of PPE Kits, Safety devices and Ayushman Bharat Cards to SSWs as only 16741 PPE Kits, 42 Safety Devices and 13412 Ayushman Bharat Cards had been distributed. The Department in their Action taken reply have stated that as on 13th April, 2025, out of 73,289 SSWs profiled, 69,231 SSWs have been validated. The Department have informed that 45,871 PPE kits for SSWs have been delivered to States/UTs, 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) have been supplied and 16,962 Ayushman cards have been made available. The Committee observe that despite the efforts made by the Department, there is still a significant gap in the profiling and validation of SSWs, distributions of PPE Kits, safety devices and Ayushman cards. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the profiling and validation of SSWs should be completed in a time bound manner and also ensure that the safety kits, PPE kits & Ayushman Cards are distributed to all the eligible SSWs without any delay. The Committee also recommend that the Department should ensure that the safety kits and PPE kits delivered to States/UTs reaches the beneficiaries thus achieving one of the objectives of NAMASTE Scheme *i.e.* 'No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human fecal matter'. SSWs may also be provided training on the use of safety devices and PPE kits to ensure safety and dignity.

CHAPTER-II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY
THE
GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No.2.12)

The Committee find that the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment have fixed annual physical targets for various schemes such as Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes, National Fellowships for SCs, National Overseas Scholarships for SCs, Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Samparna Hitgrahi (PM- DAKSH) etc. Simultaneously, the Committee also find that there are several schemes under which physical targets are not fixed by the Department, such as Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), Babu Jagjiwan Ram Chatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) and Venture Capital Fund (VCF) for SCs and OBCs, etc. The Committee believe that the success of any scheme can be measured with the achievement of targets/ goals. In the absence of targets/goals it would not be possible to assess the outcome of any scheme. The Committee would be happy if the annual physical targets are fixed for such Schemes where the welfare measures can be quantified as the Committee have found that the schemes with targets perform better than the Scheme without annual targets. In view of the above, the Committee would like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to examine the viability and fix the physical targets of all the welfare schemes of the Department so that there is no laxity in the implementation of the Schemes at any stage by the States or other Implementing Agencies.

Reply of the Government

In so far as Pre-Matric & Post-Matric Scholarship schemes for SCs are concerned no annual targets are fixed by the DoSJE. The scheme is a saturation-based scheme and whosoever applies and is eligible is sanctioned the scholarship irrespective of the number of students. As regards National Fellowships and National Overseas Scholarships for SCs annual maximum slots are fixed.

Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) is one component of umbrella scheme PM-AJAY. Under this component infrastructure development in identified SC Villages are being covered. Since the thrust is on gap-filling of infrastructure in the identified

villages, the targets related to beneficiaries cannot be computed and predicted. However, there is an overall target of number of villages to be declared as Adarsh Gram. The VCF-SC (including ASIIM) and VCF-BC specify year-wise targets for the number of SC and BC-owned companies to be supported through assistance under these schemes until the closure of the fund. Under VCF-SC, an annual target of supporting 18 companies and nurturing 250 new incubation ideas and startups has been set. Under VCF-BC, the annual target is to support 13 companies owned by entrepreneurship from Backward Classes. The Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) is now amalgamated into Hostel Component of PM-AJAY wherein, proposals are received from the State Governments/UTs after conducting a need based study for the requirement of hostel for SC students. As this component of the scheme is based on proposals received from States, the targets are not fixed. However, under this Scheme a certain percentage of funds are allocated for the Hostel Component of PM-AJAY Scheme.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.2.13)

The Committee note that the funds were surrendered in many schemes in 2023-24 due to multiple reasons. In Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes, funds were surrendered due to less receipt of application/ proposals and in Top class education for SCs and Free Coaching for SCs and OBCs proposals were received late. Similarly, in Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) funds were surrendered due to the introduction of Single Nodal Account System and in Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted Area (SHRESHTA) for SCs it was due to revision in the scheme. The Committee believe that the changes introduced in the Schemes were to streamline the system and to prevent fraud and misuse of funds. The Committee, however, do not find that surrender of funds due to reduction in late receipt of application/ proposals from States is in the interest of beneficiary. The Committee feel that delay in submission of proposal reflects very poorly on the part of State/UT Governments. The reduction in number of applications due to delay in processing of applications by the State/UT Governments is not acceptable and should be avoided by the State/UT Governments. The Committee expect that the Department would devise suitable mechanism for capacity building,

handholding to various implementing institutions of the State Governments so that all the Schemes are implemented effectively.

Reply of the Government

For effective implementation of all the Schemes of DoSJE, various measures have been introduced including capacity building, handholding/cluster/regional meetings and/or workshops for all States/UTs. These are being conducted periodically to review the progress of the States as well as to resolve any pending issues. In particular, regular Chintan Shivirs at the National level under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, and regular Regional Review meetings are being conducted under the Chairmanship of Secretary SJ&E. Every year, Project Appraisal Committee under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, D/o SJ&E reviews and appraises the Annual Action Plan received from States/UTs under the respective schemes. By hand-holding supports to the States/UTs, district, block and gram panchayat-level authorities, all eligible beneficiaries are facilitated. The National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), an autonomous body of DoSJE, also provides capacity-building and training sessions for the State government functionaries for certain Schemes. Because of the concerted effort of the Department budget utilisation in 2024-25 has shown significant improvement from 74.03% against BE and 96.53% against RE in 2023-24 to 76.93% against BE and 99.83% against RE in 2024-25.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.2.14)

National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) is undertaking work of training and research in the field of Social Defence and also addresses critical areas such as Drug Abuse prevention, Senior Citizens Welfare, transgender welfare, Beggary prevention and rehabilitation of socially marginalized and vulnerable groups. The Committee are happy to find that NISD has done remarkable work by conducting 2100 programmes during 2021-22 to 2024-25 for NGOs, GIA functionaries, social worker, schools, service providers and for different target groups on drug prevention. However, the Committee find that the Institute encounters certain challenges primarily due to shortage of human resources. The Committee find that the Institute has prepared a comprehensive plan for expansion of Rehabilitation centres, training and capacity building and to strengthen the infrastructure. The Committee

appreciate the efforts of the Institute and expect that they would continue to increase their presence amongst Senior Citizens, Transgenders, beggars and the persons suffering from drug abuse, etc. The Committee would recommend that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment will make all out efforts to ensure that the welfare activities undertaken by the Institute do not suffer for want of funds, human resources etc. and the Institute continues to contribute effectively in the welfare of the targeted persons.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee is noted for compliance and the Department will continue to support the welfare activities being undertaken by the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD).

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.3.12)

The Committee notes that under Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs, the financial assistance is provided to Scheduled Caste students studying at Post matriculation or post-secondary stage to complete their education. The Committee find that the budgetary allocation under the Scheme was ₹3,415.62 crore, ₹6,660.00 crore, ₹6,359.14 crore, whereas the actual expenditure was ₹1,978.56 crore, 4,392.50 crore and ₹5,476.22 crore in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively. The Committee also find that the funds allocated during these years could not be spent as bigger States such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Chhattisgarh have submitted reduced annual action plan in terms of beneficiaries in 2022-23 and 2023-24 and large number of applications are pending with Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab for 2022-23. The Committee find it hard to believe that despite the stop wise mechanism established by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, the State Governments are not able to complete all the formalities on time. The Committee also find that several efforts have been made by the Department for active participation of State/UT Governments for Implementation of Post Matric Scholarship Scheme. However, nothing fruitful seems to work out to avoid the delay in submission of proposals by the States. The Committee feel that the State Governments should own up their responsibility for proper implementation of the Scheme. The Committee recommend that the Department should make all-out efforts

to establish a fool proof mechanism to deal with those States that are not performing well in terms of number of beneficiaries and expenditure under the scheme so that the large number of Scheduled Castes students would be able to complete their higher education.

Reply of the Government

The Post-Matric Scheme is not fund-limiting and the objective is to achieve full-saturation for all the eligible beneficiaries. The suggestions of the Committee are agreed and the Department makes all out efforts to ensure that the concerned State Governments are provided the required hand-holding and support for full-saturation.

Suitable help is provided to the States so as to prevent delays in submitting the data in respect of beneficiaries particularly concerning the Scholarship Schemes. Loopholes, if any, in delays relating to transmitting of data etc., are addressed with the objective that all eligible beneficiaries are benefitted.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.3.13)

The Committee note that Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC students was revised in 2020-21 to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of SCs in higher education from 23.0 percent to the national average of 27.0 percent. The Committee have found that the GER of SC students has increased to 25.9 per cent in 2021-22 from 23.1 per cent in 2020-21 which is a significant improvement in GER of 18.9 per cent in 2014-15. However, the Committee are little apprehensive with regard to the target of 27 per cent fixed to be achieved by 2025-26 as several States are submitting reduced annual action plan and there is substantial delay in submitting the proposals by State/UT Governments including the pendency with several States for 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Committee feel that unless the measures taken by the Department are stringently complied by the State Governments, the target of the Department to increase the GER of SCs in higher education to the national average of GER may not be achieved. The Committee are of the opinion that the criteria adopted by the Department to identify the poorest household may also supplement the efforts of the Department in enhancing the GER of SCs subject to the condition that the State/UT Governments efficiently execute them and enhance the enrolment of SC students. The Committee have no doubts about the efforts and the competency of the Department

but the active participation of State/UT Governments is very essential to achieve the target. Hence, the Committee would like the Department to direct all the State/ UT Governments for expediting the process of identifying the poorest households from various sources and enrol the eligible SC students under the Scholarship schemes in a mission mode so that the Department would achieve the target of GER of SCs fixed to be achieved by 2025-26.

Reply of the Government

The suggestions of the Committee are noted and continuous efforts are being made to ensure that the targeted GER is achieved. As under the Scholarship Schemes of the Department there is an income criteria to be eligible for availing the benefits, the Department efforts supplement the overall action being taken by the Government on achieving the targeted GER. The Department works with the concerned State Governments to identify and ensure that all students from the SC poorest households are enrolled under the Scholarship schemes. As Post Matric Scholarships Scheme for SC Students is implemented on DBT mode, States/UTs are submitting realistic numbers with regard to their target in Annual Action Plan. In the beginning of every financial year, Project Appraisal Committee under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, D/o SJ&E reviews and appraises the Annual Action Plan in the month of April/May received from States/UTs. This Department is also taking necessary steps and providing time to time handholding to States/UTs to clear the pendency of earlier years so that target may be achieved. Scheme guidelines envisage that States/UTs are required to undertake awareness drive about the scheme through the Gram Panchayats Notice Boards, school committees, and discussions in the parent-teacher association meetings and other public awareness measures, in order to extend its coverage and also minimize any misuse by unscrupulous elements. Moreover, classified advertisements are published in National and regional newspapers in Hindi, English and regional languages. Scheme snippets are being uploaded on social media platforms for awareness. Every State Government is required to undertake a campaign every year in March/April to identify such students and mentor them to enrol and avail scholarships.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.8.11)

The Committee note that the Pre-matric Scholarship for children of parents/guardians engaged in unclean and hazardous occupation was merged with Pre-matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs. In 2021-22 with the objective of streamlining the implementation and optimizing resources. The Committee find that prior to the merger the Central share was released only to Gujarat during 2019-20 & 2020-21 and now the proposals have been received from 11 State/UT Governments in 2024-25. The Committee find that the merger has increased the number of beneficiaries from the children of persons engaged in hazardous occupation from 234592 in 2020-21 to 332969 in 2021-22. However, the actual expenditure has been less than the Budgetary Estimate in 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Committee also find that States such as Haryana, Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra did not have a single beneficiary and Central share was also not released to them in 2023-24. Further, some of the States/UTs such as Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland and Telangana are not implementing the Scheme. The Committee believe that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment must have taken appropriate measures with regard to the reasons due to which actual expenditure was less than the Budgetary Estimate and if any action is yet to be taken, then the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment may expedite it. Similarly, in regard to the non-achievement of targets fixed for 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Committee are sure that the measures taken to enhance the actual expenditure would certainly help the Department in achieving the target of 27 lakhs set up for 2024-25. The Committee desire that the States that are not implementing the Scheme and non-release of Central Share to certain States requires to be examined and the necessary action taken so that the objective of promoting literacy and uninterrupted education of the Pre-matric level amongst the SC students and children of persons engaged in hazardous occupation is achieved. The Committee would like to be informed of the action taken by the Department in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Under Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs & Others, Budgetary Estimate is for both the components combined. The details of Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 are as follows:

FY	Budgetary Estimate	Revised Estimate	Actual Expenditure
2022-23	500.00	500.00	208.62
2023-24	500.00	430.00	446.64

*During 2022-23, DBT Started.

State Govt. of Haryana has not shared their Annual Action Plan under the Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs & Others since the revision of the scheme guidelines. Similarly, the State of Jharkhand has not shared their complete Annual Action Plan for 2023-24.

Since, Goa and Madhya Pradesh have not shared any State share paid data, the Government of India contribution could not be paid. State Govt. of Maharashtra was facing challenges regarding development of Pre-Matric Scholarship Portal. This resulted in spill-over of earlier years State share paid data on the National Scholarship Portal. However, the systems have been strengthened lately. For the State Government final verified State share paid data sent on the National Scholarship Portal (NSP), the Government of India contribution has been paid during FY 2024-25.

There is no proposal from the States/UTs of Andaman and Nicobar Island, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Nagaland, as either they have no SC population or there are no eligible students. State Govt. of Telangana was not implementing the scheme as they have not adopted the revised scheme guidelines. However, recently, they have agreed to adopt the scheme guidelines in 2024-25 and therefore, the SC students would be covered under the Scheme in future.

This Department is taking several actions to achieve the targets as proposed by the States/UTs under their Annual Action plans set up for 2024-25:

- With the change in the scheme architecture as well as the funding pattern, a state of fiscal discipline and financial responsibility has come to the States/UTs where both States and UTs being the implementing agencies have streamlined their systems in line with the department guidelines as well as upgraded themselves and stabilised their systems. Moreover, with the advent of Aadhaar Payment Bridge System, the scholarship is disbursed directly into the Aadhaar-seeded accounts of the beneficiaries which has become a flag bearer among the major scholarship schemes of this department.

- Regular capacity building and handholding/cluster/regional meetings and/or workshops for all States/UTs are conducted to review the progress of the States as well as to resolve any pending issues.
- Advertisements to promote outreach and increase awareness:
 - i. Scheme snippets are being uploaded on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).
 - ii. Classified advertisements are being published in National and regional newspapers in Hindi, English and regional languages.
- Field visits: Officials dealing with Pre and Post Matric Scholarship schemes for SCs visit various institutes in the States to understand their concerns.
- Channelising various agencies/partners: Services from National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), Indian Post Payments Bank (IPPB) are being taken to ensure Aadhaar seeding of beneficiaries as non-seeding of Aadhaar is a major concern for non-disbursement of SC scholarships. PMU staff is also deputed to visit the districts with the maximum pendency so that coordination with bankers and institutions may be done.
- Monthly review of Pre & Post Matric scholarship scheme for SCs under the Chairmanship of JS (SCD)& Director, D/oSJ&E: This Division monitors the progress of the implementation of the schemes on monthly basis wherein review of schemes, State wise is undertaken.

This Department is making all efforts with the States. Regular State visits are also made for providing technical assistance and hand-holding to the States so that timely release of scholarship may be made.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.9.23)

The aim of NAMASTE is to ensure that there is zero fatalities in sanitation work in India, all sanitation work is performed by formalized skilled workers and no sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter, occupational safety training to SSWs, etc. However, the Committee have found that the Department is lagging behind in this regard as several instances of death of unskilled sanitation workers due to negligence/ non-availability of safety equipment are reported every year in the press. There is utmost need for capacity building of sanitation workers by enhancing

their occupational skills. The Committee therefore, desire that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment should ensure that all the sanitation workers are adequately trained and conduct comprehensive campaign to increase awareness amongst sanitation service seekers to obtain services for cleaning of sewer septic tanks from trained SSWs. The Committee also desire that the minimum wages may be ensured for SSWs and the State/UT Governments may be suitably directed to ensure that SSWs get minimum wages prescribed.

Reply of the Government

961 workshops have been conducted since 2023-24 for increasing awareness on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks amongst all stakeholders engaging Sewer and septic tank cleaning workers. Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA) has been appointed in 508 Districts. ERSUs have been established in 543 ULBs. Helpline number including 14420 has been made operational in 260 ERSUs.

States have been facilitated to conduct IEC campaigns in their respective ULBs. PPE kits are being supplied to validated SSWs under the scheme. Capacity building occupational training for surface SSWs has been taken up with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and validated SSWs will be provided training in phased manner. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has formulated the Model Contract to ensure the systematic emptying/ transportation/ maintenance of Sewerage/ Septic Tank and safety of all Safai Mitras. It has the provisions for formal engagement, direct payments, working hours and minimum wages etc. Payment of minimum wages is a statutory requirement under the Payment of Minimum Wages Act. However, the rates vary from State to State. Instructions have been issued to the States/UTs to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.10.13)

The Committee note that 32097, 42002, 33021 and 80135 persons were trained in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively under Pradhan Mantri Dakshta aur Kushalta Sampan Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) for SCs, OBCs and others. The Committee are happy to find that 24652, 31033 and 21552 persons trained under the Scheme secured employment in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. The Committee appreciate the performance of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment under the

Scheme but strongly feel that the number of persons trained/employed is not sufficient to cater to the large percentage of population belonging to SCs, OBCs, EWSs, DNTs, Safai Karamcharis, waste pickers, etc. It is true that there are several other Schemes under which people receive training but it is also a fact that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is a nodal Department for these sections of the society, hence, they cannot absolve themselves from their responsibility. The Committee feel that ₹450 crore approved by the Standing Finance Committee would be prudently utilized during the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26 and all measures will be taken to ensure that the target fixed are achieved. The Committee trust that the norms fixed by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for the selection of candidates for training will be meticulously applied in selection of candidates and also expect that the Institutes imparting training will be properly monitored so that qualitative training is provided to the candidates for their gainful employment and suitable action would be taken against Institutes not complying to the norms fixed for training, infrastructure, etc.

Reply of the Government

PM-DAKSH Scheme is additionally to PMKVY Scheme being implemented by M/o Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The Department is committed to train approved number of candidates within the allocated and approved budget by the Standing Finance Committee (SFC). Increasing the number of candidates under PM-DAKSH Scheme will require additional fund allocation. Third-party evaluation will be undertaken before expiry of the period of Scheme and based on the recommendations, fresh appraisal of the scheme will be done, for any changes. The scheme is implemented on pan-India basis for providing training and employment opportunities in accordance with the guidelines of the PM-DAKSH Scheme. As per the scheme's guidelines, we ensure that individuals from marginalized communities, i.e. Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs), De-notified Tribes (DNTs), Safai Karamcharis, and Waste Pickers are offered relevant skill development training. For 2023-24, a total of 53,900 trainee target had been fixed by SFC. However, a total of 80,185 trainees were trained under the scheme for 2023-24 to compensate for less number of trainees trained in the previous years.

The concern of the Committee is noted regarding the insufficient number of trained personnel to meet the needs of these communities. The selection of eligible candidates / trainees, their eligibility criteria, verification of all documents including educational

certificate and caste certificate etc. is checked by the Selection Committee and it ensures that norms fixed by the Department is meticulously applied. The DoSJE monitors all training programmes. This includes participation either directly or through their representatives in the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) meetings, review of PAC meeting minutes having details of the trainees, e-based and direct surveillance of the training programmes, consolidation of details of trained beneficiaries in the designated portal etc.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

CHAPTER- III

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

Recommendation (Para No.2.11)

The objective of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is to empower the socially, educationally and economically marginalised 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 through various Schemes and programmes. The Committee find that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment was able to spend more than 85 per cent of revised allocation in 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Department has furnished various reasons for the shortfall in the expenditure *viz.* due to non- receipt of proposals from States, availability of lucrative Schemes in the States, submission of annual action plan with reduced targets by bigger States such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Gujarat. The Committee were informed that the Department have taken various steps such as monitoring through the periodic progress reports, organizing conferences of State Social Welfare Ministers, State Welfare Secretaries, regular capacity building programmes, field visits by the officers of the Department to ensure full utilization of enhanced BE of ₹13,000.20 crore for 2024-25. The Committee appreciate the steps taken by Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and hope that these steps will help them in fixing the problems that may arise in implementation of various welfare Schemes of the Department by the State/UT Governments. Since active participation of State implementing agencies Governments and other is crucial for success of schemes of the Department, the Committee would not deter from recommending that the States/UTs that are not able to justify their role in implementing the welfare schemes should be dealt strictly, ensuring that the beneficiaries are not deprived of any of the welfare Scheme.

Reply of the Government

Funds are allocated to States/UTs at the beginning of the year as per proportion of target population to the total population of the States/UTs, in respect of certain Schemes. This notional allocation of funds is reviewed and revised in the fourth quarter of the year to accommodate higher demands of some States that have fully utilised

their notional allocation. The unspent funds of States that do not raise any demand are reallocated to other States/UTs that have fully exhausted their notional allocation and have more demand. This is done to ensure that demands of States are met to the fullest extent and to ensure that no funds remain unutilised because of less demand from few States and at the same time the States which are not able to fully utilise the funds get a reduced allocation. This is a new initiative and has been started from FY 2024-25.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No.11.10)

The Committee note that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment are running various programmes for the welfare of the senior citizens such as Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC), Rastriya Vayoshree Yojana (RVY), Elderline, Senior-care Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE), Training of Geriatric Care Givers under Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY). The Committee find that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment have not been able to spend the allocated funds in the programmes where State Governments are involved, as ₹59.32 crore could only be spent out of ₹92.15 crore allocated under Rastriya Vayoshree Yojana and ₹118.96 crore could be spent out of ₹275.05 crore allocated under Integrated Programme for senior citizens in 2023-24. The Committee believe that the role of State Governments is very crucial for effective implementation of all the component of the Scheme, hence, concrete efforts should be made to make the State Governments proactive for identifying the beneficiaries under RVY and IPSrC. The Committee are happy to note that the programmes falling under Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana were evaluated regularly. The suggestions/ recommendations received on evaluations are required to be exhaustively examined and implemented. The Committee also expect that with the expansion of Rastriya Vayoshree Yojana by increasing distribution of devices from 8 to 17 would cover large number of the senior citizens. The Committee feel that in view of increasing number of the senior citizens, the responsibility of the Central Government increases multiple times, hence, it is required that the Central and State Governments should justify their role and carry out their responsibilities with proper coordination so that senior citizens are not made to suffer due to any reasons.

Reply of the Government

Under the scheme of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY), beneficiaries in each district are identified by the State Governments/UT Administrations through the Committee chaired by the Deputy Commissioner/District Collector. Based on the data provided by State/UT Government, the implementing agency conducts camps. Between the financial years 2022-23 and 2024-25, outreach activities through camp and walk-in mode have been scaled up to provide assistive devices to beneficiaries across the country. In 2022-23, a total of 39 camps were organized, where 3,98,858 assistive devices, valued at ₹88.84 crore were distributed to 63,307 beneficiaries. In 2023-24, the number of camps increased to 130, with 62,584 beneficiaries receiving 2,54,280 assistive devices worth ₹59.32 crore. In 2024-25, 6,21,300 assistive devices valued at ₹138.84 crore were distributed to 1,28,645 beneficiaries. During the Mahakumbh event of 2025, 1,29,240 assistive devices valued at ₹20.22 crore were distributed to 25,428 beneficiaries. Thus, during the financial year 2024-25, 1,54,073 beneficiaries received 7,50,540 assistive devices valued at ₹159.06 crore.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

CHAPTER-IV

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

Recommendation (Para No. 4.28)

The Scholarship for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS) for SCs is the Umbrella Scheme which has four existing sub-Schemes viz. National Fellowships for SCs, National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for SCs, Top Class Education Scheme for SCs and Free Coaching Scheme for SC and OBC students. The Committee note that the budgetary allocation for 2022-23 and 2023-24 was less in comparison to 2021-22 but the actual expenditure has been constantly increasing since 2021-22, as it was ₹271.21 crore, ₹293.77 crore and ₹363.31 crore in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively. The Committee find that the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBC is not available on the National Scholarship Portal and onboarding of the Scheme on the portal is under consideration. The Committee also find that the Scheme is being implemented by Dr Ambedkar Foundation through empanelled Central Universities after revision of the Scheme in 2023-24 and only 19 Central Universities have signed the MOU with the Foundation. The Committee desire that the Department should take necessary steps to on-board the Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs on National Scholarship Portal and more Central Universities should be empanelled so that a large number of students of SC and OBC communities are able to appear in competitive and entrance examinations for obtaining jobs in Public/Private Sector as well as to secure admission in reputed higher educational institutions.

Reply of the Government

Continuous follow-up is done with all 56 Central Universities. However, as on date, only 19 Central Universities have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and become part of the Scheme. The Department will continue its efforts for on-boarding more Central Universities.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No. 5.9)

The Committee note that Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) is an Umbrella scheme wherein 3 centrally sponsored scheme, namely, Pradhan Mantri Adrash Gram Yojana (PM-AJAY), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) have been merged in 2021-22 due to similarity in nature. The Committee find that since 2021-22, 6282 villages in the country have been declared Adrash Grams, ₹1,023 crore provided to 184815 beneficiaries under GIA component and ₹114.23 crore sanctioned for 44 hostels covering 4985 beneficiaries. The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment for taking several steps for effective implementation of the Scheme. The Committee are however, slightly worried with the pace of actual expenditure incurred during 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Committee feel that the gap between Budgetary Estimate and Actual Expenditure should be narrowed down so that the objectives of the Scheme are fully achieved. The State Governments should be guided to take necessary steps so that more and more villages are declared Adarsh Grams in their States as it has happened in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, the construction of hostels in educational institutions should also be prioritized as large numbers of students belonging to SC community are not able to join good educational institution due to limited availability of hostels.

Reply of the Government

The Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY), consists of three components namely Adarsh Gram, Grants in Aid to State/District level Projects and Hostel component. The scheme is 100 % centrally sponsored and being implemented by the State Government/UT Administration. The expenditure incurred during last two years has been relatively low due to the introduction of the SNA system which requires States/UTs to complete the necessary mapping, causing a procedural delay. Additionally, pending Utilization Certificates and fewer proposals for Hostels and non-submission of Grants-in-aid perspective plans by some States contributed to reduced expenditure. To address this, the Department holds monthly review meetings and maintains regular communication with States/UTs to improve implementation, clear SNA balances, and ensure timely submission of UCs for smooth fund release. Furthermore, Ministry officials visit villages to oversee the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudyay Yojana (PM-AJAY) so that declaration of Adarsh

Gram is expedited by the State Governments. This Department is implementing Hostel component of PM-AJAY which aims to increase literacy and encourage enrolment of SCs students in schools and higher educational institutions by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, especially in the SC dominated blocks and elsewhere in India. With efforts and follow-up, as compared to earlier years during the FY 2024-25, the utilisation was Rs 736 Crore as against ₹471 Crore in FY 2023-24 which is an increase of 56%. The Department will ensure higher utilisation in the next financial year.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

Recommendation (Para No. 6.13)

As abolition of untouchability is enshrined in the Constitution of India, the Government of India has taken several measures such as enactment of Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Committee note that a centrally sponsored scheme was introduced to financially assist the States/UTs for strengthening the machinery for Implementation of these Acts. The Committee find that the Central assistance of ₹535.70 crore was released to various States during the year 2023-24 for functioning and strengthening of the SC/ST Protection Cell and Special Police Stations, strengthening and enforcement of judicial machinery, relief and rehabilitation of atrocity victims, incentive for inter-caste marriages and awareness generation and publicity. In this regard, the Committee have found that maximum financial assistance has been released to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Bihar during the year 2023-24. However, the Committee have observed that several States have not been able to set up the requisite system to effectively implement the provisions contained in the Acts and to deal with the cases of atrocities against SCs. The Committee were also made to understand that there is no financial constraints with the Government of India, and they are ready to release more funds to the States for the establishment of the machinery required for effective implementation of the Acts. The Committee are of the opinion that the issue of atrocities against the persons belonging to Scheduled castes should be sincerely tackled by the State Governments. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all the State Governments should be pursued by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to establish and

strengthen the machinery required for enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, effectively. "

Reply of the Government

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The objective of the Scheme is to financially assist the States/UTs towards effective implementation of various provisions of these Acts. The Department releases funds to States/UTs only on the basis of their proposals. To ensure that the beneficiaries are not deprived besides monitoring through the periodic progress reports Department is organizing conferences of State Social Welfare Ministers, State Welfare Secretaries, regular capacity building programmes, field visits by the officers of the Department. A committee under the chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Minister for the Social Justice & Empowerment exists to review the effective implementation of these Acts and the Scheme, where all States/UTs participate.

Regional meetings are being conducted by the Department to review the implementation of these Acts and the scheme, wherein region-wise the SC/ST Development/Social Welfare Department of the 5-8 States/UTs are being called for the review of the implementation of these Acts and the scheme and the State-wise review of the mechanisms set up by the States and their further requirement as per the provisions made in the Acts, has been made a permanent agenda of the meeting. These matter are discussed in the meetings with the States/UTs to emphasize the need to set up the requisite systems as prescribed in the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 and the rules framed there under for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

CHAPTER-V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE

(Recommendation Para No.7.9)

The Committee note that the Scheme of Residential Education for Students in High School in Targeted area (SRESHTA) for SCs came into existence in 2021-22 in place of Grants-in-aid to Voluntary and Other Organizations working for Scheduled Caste to provide environment for Socio-economic upliftment and overall development of Scheduled Castes. The Committee find that the Scheme is operated in two modes, as per the established norms, every year 3000 meritorious SC students (1500 for IXth class and 1500 for Xth Class) are selected for admission in the best private residential schools under Mode-I whereas under Mode-II schools/hostels run by VOs/NGOs are provided Grants-In-aid for 13500 SC Students per year. The Committee are happy to note that annual allocation of ₹2,428.00 crore made for 2024-25 is much higher in comparison to the allocation of ₹2,371.00 crore made in 2023-24 and ₹2,364.00 crore made in 2022-23 but the quantum of actual expenditure for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 is little discouraging for the Committee. Further, only 2405 students were selected under Mode-I in 2022-23 against 3000 Students fixed for selection. The Committee also note that large number of VOs/NGOs from Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh received Grants-in-aid under Mode-II from 2020-21 to 2023-24 but many States did not receive any grant. The Committee believe that the SRESHTA Scheme is crucial for the SC students to get proper education from the best schools in the country. Hence, the Committee desire that the Scheme should be well publicized so that large number of students get the benefit of the scheme. Since, the Scheme under Mode-II appears to be popular in some States only, the Committee would like the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to take suitable steps to increase awareness about the Scheme in the country to increase the footprints of the Scheme among the SC students. The Committee hope necessary action will be taken by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in this regard.

Reply of the Government

This Department has taken several measures like requesting State/UT Governments to publicize the scheme in the Schools & motivate SC students to participate in the SHRESHTA scheme. Further, the State/UT Governments were also requested to issue

necessary directions to the concerned officers to facilitate the SC students for obtaining their SC certificates at the earliest. The scheme is being published through website of the Ministry and print media as well. The Department has planned that national-level entrance exam in 2025 through which admission in best private residential schools takes place earlier, so that all the admission process such as declaration of result, e-counselling and reporting of the selected students etc. are completed by 30th June, 2025 to enable filling up all the 3000 seats.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

(Recommendation Para No.9.22)

National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem Scheme (NAMASTE) was launched in July, 2023 to formalize the Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and to ensure safety and dignity of sanitation workers in Urban India. It is implemented in convergence amongst key stakeholders including Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation and Ministry of skill Development and Entrepreneurship. As per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, there are likely to be one lakh Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) in the country. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs are required to converge for interventions such as profiling of SSWs through MIS portal, nomination of Responsible Sanitation Authority, setting up of Emergency Response Sanitation Unit, etc. In view of the involvement of several Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations, the Committee are of the opinion that for the success of the NAMASTE. It is important that there is proper coordination amongst them so that the responsibilities entrusted over them are carried out smoothly. Unless all the SSWs are validated they would be deprived from the benefits of the Scheme. The Committee find that out of 43961 profiled SSWs, 37407 SSWs have been validated by the concerned Urban Local Bodies. The Committee, therefore, desire that all the SSWs should be profiled and validated urgently. Further, the pace of the distribution of PPE Kits, Safety devices and Ayushman Bharat Cards to SSWs is required to be increased as only 16741 PPE Kits, 42 Safety Devices and 13412 Ayushman Bharat Cards have been provided to them. The Committee expect that the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment would take all necessary steps for the

welfare of the SSWs and effective Implementation of NAMASTE in a time bound manner.

Reply of the Government

National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) has been launched in July, 2023 with aim to ensure safety and dignity of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). Profiling of SSWs could be started in last week of December, 2024 and is being done continuously in coordination with States/UTs. Profiling has been carried out in all States / UTs. Tamil Nadu and Odisha have their own schemes and are profiling SSWs. The details of validated SSWs by Tamil Nadu and Odisha will be merged with details of validated SSWs. As on 13.04.2025, out of 73,289 profiled SSWs, 69,231 SSWs have been validated by the concerned Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). 45,871 PPE kits for SSWs have been delivered to States / UTs. 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) have been supplied. Ayushman cards have been made available to 16,962 beneficiaries. Support of Urban Local bodies, National Health Authority (NHA), Common Service Centre (CSC) etc. is being sought to expedite the process for issuance of Ayushman Cards. Responsible Sanitation Authorities (RSA) have been appointed in 557 Districts. ERSUs have been established in 576 ULBs. Helpline number including 14420 has been made operational in 290 ERSUs. 961 workshops have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks in Municipal Corporation/ Municipality/ Nagar Palika and other such organizations engaging Sewer and septic tank cleaning workers. Further, the recommendation of the Committee is noted for strict compliance.

**Department of Social Justice and Empowerment OM No. G-3/2/2024-
Budget Dated 30.06.2025**

**NEW DELHI;
19th August, 2025
28 Shravana, 1947 (Saka)**

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

**MINUTES OF THE NINETEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2024-25) HELD ON TUESDAY, 19TH
AUGUST, 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. Vijayalakshmi Devi
4. Shri Chintamani Maharaj
5. Shri Murari Lal Meena
6. Smt. Bag Mitali
7. Shri Bhojraj Nag
8. Shri Godam Nagesh
9. Shri Gajendra Singh Patel
10. Shri Rajkumar Roat
11. Shri Matheswaran V. S.
12. Adv. Priya Saroj
13. Shri Sasikanth Senthil
14. Shri Anoop Pradhan Valmiki
15. Shri Mansukhbhai Dhanjibhai Vasava
16. Dr. Lata Wankhede

Rajya Sabha

17. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
18. Shri Narayana Koragappa
19. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam
20. Shri Rameswar Teli
21. Smt. Mamata Thakur
22. Shri Niranjana Bishi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Mamta Kemwal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Vinay Pradeep Barwa | - | Director |
| 3. | 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) Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their First Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment).

(ii) *** **

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.

*** Does not pertain to this Report.

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE CONTAINED IN THEIR FIRST REPORT (EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA) ON 'DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2024-25)' OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT).

	Total	Percentage
I. Total number of Recommendations	15	
II. Observations/ Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government- Rec. Para No.2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 3.12, 3.13, 8.11, 9.23 & 10.13	8	53.33%
III. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply: - Rec. Para No. 2.11 & 11.10	2	13.33%
IV. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration: – Rec. Para No. 4.28, 5.9 & 6.13	3	20%
V. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature: - Rec. Para No.7.9 & 9.22	2	13.34%
		100%