

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding guidelines for Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Caste students -laid.

SHRI K. ASHOK KUMAR (KRISHNAGIRI): The Government of Tamil Nadu has a strong belief that Social and economic upliftment of under privileged sections of the society would be possible and sustainable only by ensuring their educational progress especially in the field of higher education and hence Tamil Nadu Government has been implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes in its true letter and spirit.

I would like to draw attention to the recent revision of guidelines for the Scheduled Castes Post-Matric Scholarship scheme, wherein it has been stated that the fees claimed against the Management quota/Spot admission seat in any institutions / Universities will not be reimbursed with effect from April, 2018. In Tamil Nadu, large number of Scheduled Castes students belonging to poor economic background who are not able to get admission under the government quota on merit, have been availing the benefit under the Post-Matric Scholarship scheme under management quota seats in self-financing colleges. As a result, the number of Scheduled Castes students joining the Higher and Technical Education Institutions in the State has increased tremendously. In fact, this scheme has largely benefitted the State to achieve a higher Gross Enrollment Ratio of more than 45%. Non-reimbursement of fees for management quota seats under the new guidelines will create a huge setback in achieving the goal of social equity and social justice as it will deny opportunities to the poor Scheduled Castes students in the fields of higher and technical education. This may cause serious resentment and unrest among the Scheduled Castes community.

Another important issue is the sharing pattern between the Center and State for funding the scheme. Presently the expenditure under scheme at the end of the five years (plan) period is taken as the committed liability of the state for the next five years. While the committed liability of Tamil Nadu was Rs. 353.55 crore in 2011-12 with effect from 2017-18, it has risen to Rs. 1526.46 crores. This puts an unbearable burden on the State Government finances for its high performance in the last 5 years. It also results in a situation, where this Central sector scheme will be largely (if not fully) funded by the State from its own resources. Therefore, it is requested that in line with other Central Schemes, the scheme may be funded with a sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Centre and the State.

Further the release of funds by the Government of India to the State Government under this scheme over the years has been both delayed and inadequate. Up to 2017-18 the State is yet to receive arrears of Rs. 1579.58 crores from the Government of India. It is requested that the release of this arrear amount to the State of Tamil Nadu may be expedited, to release the strain on the State Government's finances.