

Empowerment of Socially Disadvantaged Groups

10.79 Welfare programmes for the Scheduled Castes, religious and linguistic minorities, socially and educationally backward classes, the aged, the physically challenged and also social defence and juvenile social maladjustment are being undertaken by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. For the Ninth Five Year Plan an allocation of Rs.6,194 crore has been made available. For 2001-02 the total outlay for the Ministry is Rs.1,332 crore (excluding Animal Welfare) under Plan Schemes. Provision of Special Central Assistance for the Special Component Plan is a major scheme for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes (SC). During 2001-02, Rs .407 crore has been allocated under this scheme out of which Rs.205 crore has been utilized upto November , 2001. The State Governments prepare project reports for providing support to families below the poverty line for income generating activities and for improvement of infrastructure development in areas predominantly inhabited by SC population. The National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers has been revamped to enable the poorest and least enterprising of the safai karamcharis to organize themselves for taking up alternate work. Sanitary marts are set up with the objective of organizing scavengers into groups/cooperatives in towns with a population of over 1 lakh and having a sufficient number of scavengers to establish these marts cum production centres. The marts would cater to the sanitary needs of the common man and be run on commercial lines.

10.80 During 2001-02, Rs.6 crore has been released upto November, 2001 for 4,50,000 (anticipated) beneficiaries under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in unclean

occupations. Rs.46 crore has been released under this Scheme to 15,51,000 (anticipated) SC students. For schemes pertaining to Backward Classes, and amount of Rs.29 crore has been released out of a total allocation of Rs.79 crore for the year 2001-02. Rs.12 crore out of a total allocation of Rs.40 crore for 2001-02 have been released for schemes for welfare of minorities. An amount of Rs.16 crore has been released for construction of hostels for SC boys/girls against an allocation of Rs.39.10 crore for the year. Funds have also been released towards the schemes of Book Banks for SC students, Upgradation of Merit of SC students and Coaching and Allied activities. For 2001-02 an enhanced Central Pool Allocation of Rs.926 crore has been provided for the Welfare Schemes of SCs, OBCs and Minorities as against Rs.801 crore (BE) made available for 2000-01.

10.81 Economic empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups is a major area of concern. The five apex level finance Corporations viz. National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation, National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation, National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation, National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation assist beneficiaries to undertake self employment ventures. These Corporations also fund Self Help Groups for micro financing in order to expand the coverage of the targeted population.

10.82 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been set up in 1999 to attend exclusively to the needs of the tribal population in the country. For 2001-02 Rs.1,040 crore have been made available under various Plan schemes for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Tribes.