

SOCIAL WELFARE

10.49 The programmes for educational development, economic empowerment and social empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups and marginalized sections of the society are implemented through the close participation of State Governments, UT Administrations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Public-private partnership (PPP) approach is also one of the strategies for attaining the objectives of development of the targeted groups.

Scheduled Castes

10.50 The Government is committed towards educational development of Scheduled Castes. A number of schemes are being implemented to encourage Scheduled Caste students for continuing their education from school level to higher education. During the year 2008-09, the physical target for providing scholarship under the scheme was 6,22,346 beneficiaries under the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarships to the children of those engaged in unclean occupation. An amount of Rs 59.27 crore was released to the State Governments/UT Administrations for providing scholarship to SC students during the year. The rates of scholarship, annual ad-hoc grant, pattern of funding and eligibility criteria has been revised with effect from April 1, 2008. The physical target for providing scholarship under the scheme was 35 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme of Post-Matric Scholarships. An amount of Rs. 645.49 crore was released to State Governments/UT Administrations for providing scholarships to SC students during the year. The earlier Centrally-sponsored scheme of hostels for SC boys and girls was revised and renamed as "Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatravas Yojana" w.e.f. January 1, 2008. As a part of this revision, Central assistance for construction of girls' hostels was raised from 50 per cent to 100 per cent. During 2008-09, the physical target under the scheme was to construct 64 hostels for 4,938 girls and 45 hostels for 3,138 boys. An amount of Rs. 84.26 crore was released under the scheme during the year. An expenditure of Rs 87.94 crore has been made under Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for 1,333 students SC students for pursuing M.Phil and Ph.D. courses during 2008-09.

10.51 The scheme of top class education for SCs provides financial assistance for quality education to SC students up to graduation and post-graduation

levels without any burden on the pupil or his/her family. SC students, who secure admission in the notified institutions, are awarded scholarships. During 2008-09, the physical target under the scheme was 383 beneficiaries. The expenditure incurred during the year was Rs.4.96 crore. The scheme of National Overseas Scholarships for Scheduled Caste candidates provides financial assistance to the finally selected candidates for pursuing higher studies abroad in specified fields of master level courses and Ph.D. in the field of engineering, technology and sciences. Thirty awards are given per year. During 2008-09, the expenditure incurred was Rs. 5 crore under the scheme.

10.52 Special Central Assistance is given to Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, a major scheme for economic advancement of persons belonging to Scheduled Castes. During 2008-09, more than 3.61 lakh persons got benefited under the scheme. An amount of Rs. 601.6 crore was released during the year. National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation provides credit facilities to the beneficiaries who are living below double the poverty line. During 2008-09, an amount of Rs. 45 crore was released to the Corporation to enhance its equity to Rs. 145.33 crore. The Corporation provided loan to about 38,921 beneficiaries during the period. Under the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) schemes, there is no income criteria. During 2008-09, Rs. 30 crore was provided to enhance the equity of the corporation to Rs. 230 crore. Approximately, the corporation provided benefit to 23,432 beneficiaries during 2008-09. During 2008-09, Rs. 100 crore was released to NSKFDC under Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) for organizing training of manual scavengers and helping to take up alternative occupations.

Scheduled Tribes

10.53 For the welfare and development of STs, an outlay of Rs. 2,121 crore has been provided in the Annual Plan for 2008-09, which is 23.33 per cent higher than the outlay of Rs. 1,719.71 crore for the year 2007-08 (RE). The outlay of 2008-09 includes Rs. 900 crore provided as Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal-Sub Plan (TSP) which includes Rs. 150 crore for development of forest villages. Special Central Assistance (SCA) to TSP is a 100 per cent grant extended to states as an additional funding to

undertake a number of developmental schemes on family-oriented income-generating schemes, creation of incidental infrastructure, extending financial assistance to SHGs for community-based activities, and development of forest villages. Grant-in-aid under Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution is also being provided to the states with an objective to promote the welfare of STs and improve administration in the states to bring them at par with the rest of the states, and to take up such special welfare and development programmes which are otherwise not included in the plan programmes. Under the scheme of Post-Matric Scholarships (PMS), all eligible ST students are provided with financial assistance towards reimbursement of fees to pursue their education at the post-matric level including professional and graduate and post-graduate courses in recognized institutions. A new Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education for ST students was launched during the year 2007-08 with the objective of encouraging meritorious ST students to pursue studies at degree and post-degree level in any of the 127 identified institutes. The family income of the ST students from all the sources shall not exceed Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum.

10.54 Economic empowerment of STs continued through extension of financial support through National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC). Financial support is being extended to ST beneficiaries/ entrepreneurs in the form of term loans and micro credit at concessional rate of interest for income generating activities. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) is engaged in marketing development of tribal products and their retail marketing through its sales outlets. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act was notified for operation with effect from December 31, 2007. The responsibility for implementing the Act vests with the State/UT Governments. As per information collected from states till March 31, 2009, more than 20.50 lakh claims have been filed. More than 1.52 lakh titles have been distributed and another 1.93 lakh are ready for distribution. Most of the states hope to complete the process in 2009. There is great emphasis on the education of ST girls, especially in the low literacy areas. During 2008-09, funds were released for 126 educational complexes benefiting 26,272 ST girls under the revised scheme of Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts.

Minorities

10.55 Five communities — Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis — were notified by the Government as minority communities under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. As per the 2001 Census, the minority communities constitute 18.42 per cent of the total population. For the development of minorities, the plan outlay was doubled to Rs. 1,000 crore in 2008-09. Three scholarship schemes have been launched exclusively for the minorities with a total provision of Rs. 305 crore in 2008-09. A multi-sectoral development programme to address the 'development deficits', especially in education, skill development, employment sanitation, housing, drinking water, etc., in minority concentration districts (MCDs) has been launched from 2008-09 with a provision of Rs. 540 crore. The corpus of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) has been enhanced from Rs. 100 crore in 2005-06 to Rs. 310 crore in 2008-09 for expanding its activities for implementation of educational schemes for educationally backward minorities. The authorized share capital of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) has been raised from Rs. 650 crore in 2006-07 to Rs. 850 crore in 2008-09 for expanding its loan and micro-finance operations to promote self-employment and other economic ventures among backward sections of the minority communities.

Other Backward Classes

10.56 The Central Government provides assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for educational development of Other Backward Classes. During 2008-09, under Pre-Matric Scholarships for OBCs, it was proposed to provide scholarship to 9 lakh OBC students. An amount of Rs. 32.17 crore was released to State Governments and UT Administrations during the year. Under the Post-Matric Scholarships for OBCs, it was proposed to provide scholarship to 10 lakh OBC students. An amount of Rs. 179.69 crore was released to the State Governments/ UT Administrations during the year. In order to provide hostel facilities to OBC students studying in middle/higher secondary schools, colleges and universities for enabling them to pursue higher studies, during 2008-09, an amount of Rs. 34.55 crore was released for construction of 117 hostels with 8,315 seats. The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation extends credit facilities to persons living below double the poverty line for undertaking various income

generating activities which include agricultural and allied activities, artisan and traditional occupations, technical trades, self-employment, small scale and tiny industry, small business, transport services, etc. During 2008-09, Rs. 36 crore was provided as equity support to the Corporation enhancing its equity to Rs. 527.35 crore. During the year, the corporation had assisted about 1,22,273 persons.

Persons with disabilities

10.57 The programmes are implemented through national and apex institutes dealing with various categories of disabilities. These institutes conduct short-term and long-term courses for various categories of personnel for providing rehabilitation services to those needing them. With active support of State Governments, District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) are being set up to provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Centres are being set up in unreached and unserved districts of the country in a phased manner. Sanction for 199 centres has been obtained out of which 171 are functional. These centres provide services like prevention and early detection, referral for medical intervention and surgical correction, fitment of artificial aids and appliances, provision of training for acquisition of skills through vocational training, job placement in local industries, etc., at district headquarters as well as through camp approach.

10.58 Under the scheme of Assistance to the Disabled for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP), the main objective is to provide grant-in-aid to the various implementing agencies (NGOs/NIs/District Disability Rehabilitation Centres/ALIMCO/State Handicapped Development Corporations/ other local bodies) to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and

psychological rehabilitation, by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential. The scheme also envisages conduct of corrective surgeries, whenever required, before providing an assistive device. From the year 2007-08, a new approach for district-wise allocation of funds to organize disability camps for distribution of aids and appliances has been adopted to ensure coverage throughout the country. Approximately 2 lakh persons with disabilities are provided assistive devices under the scheme every year. During 2008-09, an amount of Rs. 60.22 crore was released to NGOs under the scheme for providing assistive devices to persons with disabilities. Rs. 64.66 crore has been released during 2008-09 under the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme to voluntary organizations for running special schools for children with hearing, visual and mental disability, rehabilitation centres for persons with various disabilities including leprosy cured persons, manpower development in the field of mental retardation and cerebral palsy and establishment. The Incentives to Employers in the Private Sector for Providing Employment to Persons with Disabilities scheme was launched on April 1, 2008. Under the scheme, the Government will have to make payment of employer's contribution to the Employees Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance Corporation for the first three years as an incentive for every employee with disabilities appointed on or after April 1, 2008, with monthly emoluments up to Rs. 25,000..

10.59 The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation provides credit facilities to persons with disability for their economic empowerment. The corporation provides loans at concessional rates of interest to about 5,000 persons with disabilities annually. During 2008-09, an amount of Rs. 18 crore was released to the corporation augmenting its equity to Rs. 418 crore.