

### **Welfare of Weaker Sections**

33. The National Scheme for Liberalization and Rehabilitation of Scavengers aims to provide alternate dignified and viable occupation to each scavenger and his/her dependents. The scheme which was modified w.e.f. 1.4.1996, inter-alia, includes TRYSEM norms for training, release of central assistance direct to Scheduled Caste Development Corporation and adoption of cluster approach in the training and rehabilitation programme. The National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation set up in January 1997 provides loans for higher education to students from safai karamchari community besides providing assistance in self-employment ventures and technical and entrepreneurial skills.

34. The National Commission for Minorities, reconstituted w.e.f. 26.11.1996 to focus on effective implementation of 15 point programme for the welfare of minorities, has constituted a High Powered Study Committee for socio-economic conditions of minorities in India. The Central Government has raised equity share towards National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation from 25 per cent to 60 per cent.

35. The welfare of STs and SCs is being closely monitored by the state governments through the Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) with the support of special central assistance provided by the Central government. The consolidated achievements during the Eighth Plan (1992-97) had been 51.53 lakh ST families against the target of 49.78 lakh families. The target for 1997-98 was fixed as 10.97 lakh ST families out of which 9.86 lakh ST families were assisted. A target of 11.01 lakh families has been fixed for 1998-99 out of which 4.13 lakh ST families have been assisted up to 30.11.1998. On going schemes like pre-matric and post-matric scholarship and providing hostel facilities to SC boys and girls continued to be operative in 1998-99.

36. In addition to various schemes for the development and growth of welfare of disabled persons, a national centre for drug abuse prevention has been established. A sum of Rs.1539 crore has been provided in central sector plan during 1998-99 (BE) for various schemes of welfare of weaker sections of the society including minorities, persons with disabilities and others covered under Social defence.