

Welfare Schemes for the Development of Scheduled Castes

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Abstract: After independence, the life of the schedule caste people started undergoing a radical transformation along with the other weaker sections in the society. The government started taking several schemes for their socio - economic upliftment. The Indian constitution also provides special privileges and safe guards for them like reservations in the educational institutions and public services. Government is committed to the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and in particular, ensuring full equality of opportunity in education and employment.

Keywords: welfare schemes, Development, scheduled casts, Implementation

1. Introduction

Scheduled castes are those castes in the country that suffer from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of age - old practice of untouchability and certain others on account of lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation, and who need special consideration for safeguarding their interests and for their accelerated socio - economic development.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal Ministry to oversee the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Though the primary responsibility for promotion of interests of the Scheduled Castes rests with all the Central Ministries in the area of their operations and the State Governments, the Ministry complements their efforts by way of interventions in critical sectors through specifically tailored schemes. The Scheduled Castes Development (SCD) Bureau of the Ministry aims to promote the welfare of Scheduled Castes through their educational, economic and social empowerment. Efforts made by State Governments and Central Ministries for protecting and promoting the interests of Scheduled Castes are also monitored.

2. Objectives

- 1) To study about welfare schemes for schedule caste.
- 2) To review how government give up - lift for schedule caste.
- 3) To know about development of schedule caste people from schemes of government.

3. Methodology

This study depends on secondary data. This data gathered from books and central government reports. It is a descriptive method.

Concepts

Schedule caste: the official name given in India to the lowest caste, considered 'untouchable' in orthodox Hindu scriptures and practice, officially regarded as socially disadvantaged.

Empowerment: Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self - determination in people and in communities. This enables them to represent their interests in a responsible and self - determined way, acting on their own authority.

Problems faced by schedule caste: Socially discriminating by dominated caste people, politically dominated by upper caste and economically ground trodden. Schedule Caste people suffering from lack of education and employment and Facing communal attacks.

Government goals

- Social empowerment
- Political empowerment
- Economic empowerment

Social Empowerment:

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955: In pursuance of Article 17 of the Constitution of India, the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 was enacted and notified on 08.05.1955. Subsequently, it was amended and renamed in the year 1976 as the "Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955". Rules under this Act, "The Protection of Civil Rights Rules, 1977" were notified in 1977. The Act extends to the whole of India and provides punishment for the practice of untouchability. It is implemented by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Assistance is provided to States/ UTs for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: Assistance is provided to States/ UTs for implementation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Financial assistance is provided to the States/ UTs for implementation of these Acts, by way of relief to atrocity victims, incentive for inter - caste marriages, awareness generation, setting up of exclusive Special courts, etc. Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 (No.1 of 2016) was notified in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) on 01.01.2016. The Amended Act came into force w. e. f 26.01.2016.

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Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995: PoA Rules were amended in June 2014 for enhancing the relief amount to the victims of atrocities to become between Rs.75, 000/- to Rs.7, 50, 000/- depending upon the nature of an offence. Further Amendment done in the Principal Rules namely the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 by the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Rules, 2016 have been notified in the Gazette of India Extraordinary on 14th April, 2016.

The 'Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013' (MS Act, 2013):

Eradication of dry latrines and manual scavenging and rehabilitation of manual scavengers in alternative occupation has been an area of high priority for the Government. Towards this end, a multi - pronged strategy was followed, consisting of the following legislative as well as programmatic interventions:

- 1) Enactment of "Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 (1993 Act);"
- 2) Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) Scheme for conversion of dry latrines into sanitary latrines in urban areas; and
- 3) Launching of National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers (NSLRS).
- 4) Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.

In spite of the above measures taken by the Government, manual scavenging continued to exist which became evident with the release of 2011 the Census data indicating existence of more than 26 lakh insanitary latrines in the country. Therefore, Government decided to enact another law to cover all types of insanitary latrines and situations which give occasion for manual scavenging. The 'Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013' (MS Act, 2013) was passed by the Parliament in September, 2013 and has come into force from 6th December, 2013. This Act intends to, inter alia, achieve its objectives to:

- 1) Identify and eliminate the insanitary latrines.
- 2) Prohibit: - i) Employment as Manual Scavengers and ii) Hazardous manual cleaning of sewer and septic tanks
- 3) Identify and rehabilitate the manual scavengers.

Political Empowerment:

According to 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment mad some changes in schedule caste people lives. That is 1/3 seats reserved for schedule caste, schedule tribes and women in levels of rural and urban local bodies. In other legislative bodies percentage of population based seats allotted for schedule caste candidates. But here we can observe some facts also. Schedule caste representatives dominated by upper class people due to lack of financial source of schedule caste people.

Economic Empowerment:

- a) **National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC):** Set up under the Ministry, to finance income generating activities of Scheduled Caste

beneficiaries living below double the poverty line limits (presently Rs 98, 000/- per annum for rural areas and Rs 1, 20, 000/- per annum for urban areas). NSFDC assists the target group by way of refinancing loans, skill training, Entrepreneurship Development Programmes and providing marketing support through State Channelizing Agencies, RRBs, Public Sector Bank and Other Institutions

- b) **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC):** It is another corporation under the Ministry which provides credit facilities to beneficiaries amongst Safai Karamcharis, manual scavengers and their dependants for income generating activities for socio - economic development through State Channelizing Agencies
- c) **Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub - Plan (SCSP):** It is a policy initiative for development of Scheduled Castes in which 100 % assistance is given as an additive to SCSP of the States/ UTs on the basis of certain criteria such as SC population of the States/UTs, relative backwardness of States/UTs, percentage of SC families in the States/ UTs covered by composite economic development programmes in the State Plan to enable them to cross the poverty line, etc. It is an umbrella strategy to ensure flow of targeted financial and physical benefits from all the general sectors of development for the benefit of Scheduled Castes. Under this Scheme, the States /UTs are required to formulate and implement Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes as part of their annual plans by earmarking resources
- d) **Scheme of Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs):** Share Capital contribution is released to the State Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs) under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in the ratio of 49: 51 between Central Government and State Governments. There are in total 27 such State - level Corporations which are working for the economic development of Scheduled Castes, although some of these Corporations are also catering to the requirements of other weaker sections of the Society, e. g. Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Minorities etc. The main functions of SCDCs include identification of eligible SC families and motivating them to undertake economic development schemes, sponsoring the schemes to financial institutions for credit support, providing financial assistance in the form of the margin money at a low rate of interest, providing subsidy out of the funds made available to the States under the Scheme of Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan of the States to reduce the repayment liability and providing necessary tie up with other poverty alleviation programs. The SCDCs are playing an important role in providing credit and missing inputs by way of margin money loans and subsidy to the target group. The SCDCs finance the employment oriented schemes covering diverse areas of economic activities which inter - alia include (i) agriculture and allied activities including minor irrigation (ii) small scale industry (iii) transport and (iv) trade and service sector
- e) **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes:** The objective of the fund is to promote entrepreneurship amongst the Scheduled Castes who are oriented towards

innovation and growth technologies and to provide concessional finance to the scheduled caste entrepreneurs. The fund has been launched on 16.01.2015. During 2014 - 15, Rs.200 Corer were released initially for the Fund to IFCI Limited, which is a Nodal agency to implement it

- f) **Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes:** The objective of this Scheme is to provide credit guarantee facility to Young and start - up entrepreneurs, belonging to Scheduled Castes, who aspire to be part of neo middle class category, with an objective to encourage entrepreneurship in the lower strata of the Society resulting in job creation besides creating confidence in Scheduled Castes. The Scheme has been launched on 06.05.2015. Initially, Rs.200 Corer has been released under the Scheme to IFCI Limited, which is a Nodal agency to implement it.

4. Conclusion

Schedule caste people discriminated by dominant caste people from the decades. Schedule caste people till today suffering from lack of education, employment and empowerment in social, political and economic. So the constitution of India provides some facilities for them. That way government creates and implementation some welfare schemes for up lift of schedule caste people.

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