

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2328
ANSWERED ON 09.08.2023

Scrapping of Minority Scholarships

2328. MS. DOLA SEN:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted an analysis/study to analyze the impact that scrapping of scholarship schemes will have on students belonging to minority communities in 2023-24;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government has planned to cover all the said students who will be losing their scholarships under any other schemes/ scholarships in 2023-24; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (d): The Government has implemented various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every strata, including minorities, especially the economically weaker and lesser privileged sections of the society, through various schemes of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Rural Development.

Ministry of Minority Affairs has specifically implemented various schemes, including Pre-Matric, Post Matric and Merit-cum-Means Scholarship schemes, across the country for socio-economic and educational empowerment of the six notified minority communities. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 makes it obligatory for the Government to provide free and compulsory elementary education (classes I to VIII) to each and every child. Accordingly, only students studying in classes IX and X are covered under the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme of this Ministry.

The Government has discontinued Maulana Azad National Fellowship (MANF) Scheme and Padho Pardesh Scheme from the year 2022-23. However, the beneficiaries under MANF Scheme are covered under the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) Scheme of UGC and CSIR which is open for students of all social categories and communities including minorities. Further, students from minority communities are also covered under National Fellowship Schemes for Scheduled Castes and OBCs implemented by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and National Fellowship Scheme for Scheduled Tribes implemented by Ministry of Tribal Affairs. In view of the overlap among the aforesaid Schemes and possibilities of misuse and duplication, it has been decided to discontinue the MANF Scheme from 2022-23 onwards. The existing MANF Fellows will continue to receive Fellowships till the end of their respective tenure, subject to compliance with the extant guidelines.

Similarly, for the beneficiaries under the Scheme of Padho Pardesh, the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC), a PSU under Ministry of Minority Affairs, provides educational loan for education abroad, at low rate of interest, exclusively to students belonging to minority communities. It has also been observed that benefits of interest subsidy that got accrued to the beneficiaries under the Padho Pardesh scheme were limited and also that there is an overlap with other similar schemes being implemented by other Ministries viz. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which are applicable to eligible minority community students as well.
