

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 929
ANSWERED ON 28.07.2025

EMPOWERING MINORITIES: BUILDING INCLUSIVE INDIA

929. SHRI RYAGA KRISHNAIAH:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the specific policies and initiatives currently in place to ensure the economic, educational, and social empowerment of minority communities in the country;
- (b) whether there are any targeted health initiatives or programs designed to cater to the specific needs of minority communities, especially in rural or marginalized regions; and
- (c) the measures that are being taken to promote inter-community harmony and ensure that minorities feel integrated and represented in mainstream society?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a): The Government implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every strata, including minorities, especially the economically weaker and lesser privileged sections of the society. Ministry of Minority Affairs specifically implements various schemes across the country, for socio-economic and educational empowerment of the six (6) centrally notified minority communities viz. Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Parsi and Sikh. These schemes are as under:

i. PMJVK

Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and one of the flagship programmes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The scheme aims at the creation of community infrastructure in Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs) of the country to address development deficits in sectors such as Health, Skill Development, Women Centric Projects, Drinking Water & Supply, Sanitation and Sports. The objective of PMJVK includes improving the socio-economic conditions of the notified minority communities in the identified areas by providing better infrastructure and basic amenities.

ii. SCHOLARSHIP

The Ministry implements the following three Scholarship schemes for the educational empowerment of the six centrally notified minority communities:

- a) Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme;
- b) Post Matric Scholarship Scheme; and
- c) Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Scheme.

The schemes intend to lower the burden of financially weaker section of religious minority communities. All the above Scholarship Schemes of the Ministry are implemented through a revamped version of the National Scholarship Portal (NSP 2.0). The scholarship amount is transferred to the bank accounts of students through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.

Apart from scholarship schemes, this Ministry implemented Padho Pardesh scheme which aimed to award interest subsidy on educational loan to minority students for studying abroad to pursue approved courses of study at Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. levels. The scheme has been discontinued from FY 2022-23 as education loan is available at cheaper rates through various other Government interventions.

The Maulana Azad National Fellowship (MANF) scheme intends to provide fellowships in the form of financial assistance to students belonging to the minority communities to pursue degrees in higher education such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. in India. The scheme has been discontinued from 2022-23 due to its apparent overlapping with similar schemes of other Ministries. The fellowship to existing beneficiaries would continue till the completion of their studies as per extant guidelines.

iii. PRADHAN MANTRI VIRASAT KA SAMVARDHAN (PM VIKAS)

The Ministry of Minority Affairs implements skilling schemes that are aimed towards upliftment of the minority youths and leadership development amongst women from minority communities.

The Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry which converges five erstwhile schemes viz. 'Seekho Aur Kamao', 'Nai Manzil', 'Nai Roshni', 'USTTAD' and 'Hamari Dharohar' schemes and focuses on upliftment of six notified minority communities through the following:

- i. Skilling and Training (Non-traditional and traditional)
- ii. Women Leadership and Entrepreneurship
- iii. Education (through National Institute of Open Schooling)
- iv. Infrastructure Development (through Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram)

The scheme has also provisions to facilitate credit linkages by connecting beneficiaries with loan programs offered by the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC). PM VIKAS Scheme is implemented on SIDH portal of NSDC. Further, Ministry has onboarded knowledge partners under PM VIKAS including NIOS, EPCH and NID through signing MoUs. The Ministry has already allocated three projects under the scheme:

- a. Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) - 31,600 candidates (that includes 29,600 under non-traditional skilling and 2,000 under education support component)
- b. State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHM) Tripura – 7,950 candidates
- c. Indian Institute of Information Technology, Kottayam – 450 candidates (that includes 150 under non-traditional skilling and 300 under Leadership & Entrepreneurship component)

iv. NATIONAL MINORITIES DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE CORPORATION (NMDFC)

National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) implements its schemes to ensure the economic, educational & social empowerment of “backward sections” among the notified minority communities by providing concessional loan for self-employment income generation ventures across the country. The schemes of NMDFC are implemented through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) nominated by respective State Govt./ UT Administration, Punjab Gramin Bank and Canara Bank.

(b): Under PMJVK, the Ministry has sanctioned various health-related projects to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs). These include: Hospitals and Medical Colleges, Child Malnutrition Treatment Centres, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic Dispensaries, Public Health Centres (PHCs), Health Sub-Centres, Community Health Centres (CHCs), Laboratory and Research Facilities, Labour Rooms, etc. These initiatives are taken to ensure better healthcare access and services to the minority communities in underserved regions.

Jiyo Parsi Scheme is a unique Central Sector Scheme for arresting the population decline of the Parsi Community in India. The scheme was launched in the year 2013-14. The objective of the scheme is to reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions, stabilize their population and increase the population of Parsis in India. The scheme has three components:

- i) Medical – to provide financial assistance for medical treatment under standard medical protocol;
- ii) Health of Community – to provide financial assistance to Parsi couples towards childcare and assistance to dependent elderly; and
- iii) Advocacy – to create awareness among the younger generation of marriageable age and young couples to make efforts to contain the population decline of the community and to seek early diagnosis and treatment where necessary.

(c): Under PMJVK, creation of Health Centres, Schools, Hostels, and Skill Centres in Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs) fosters inclusive development and shared community assets.

As per PM VIKAS Scheme Guidelines, the scheme “to promote inter-community solidarity, up to 25 percent of the non-minority community among the Traditional Training Component and 15 percent in other components (belonging to EWS category) may be considered at scheme level in respective components”.

Further, the Ministry of Minority Affairs organises 'Lok Samvardhan Parv', bringing together minority artisans from across India. The platform offers artisans a unique opportunity to showcase their indigenous arts, crafts, and rich cultural heritage. The event has been designed not only to promote the traditions of minority communities but also to foster an innovative and entrepreneurial environment for artisans. So far, the Ministry has organised 04 Lok Samvardhan Parvs.

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) formed under the NCM Act, 1992 has been, inter-alia, entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard the interests of the Minority communities. During the tenure of last Commission i.e. from September, 2021 to April, 2025, in pursuance of goals of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas', the Commission organized 40 'Sarvdharm Samvad' and other meetings with minority communities to promote an environment of harmony and amity. The Commission also observed 25 'Sarvdharm Sadbhav' celebrations of religious festivals for fostering unity and social cohesion.
