

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No 4486
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.03.2025

REDUCTION IN FUNDING FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS

4486 SHRI SUDAMA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of **TRIBAL AFFAIRS** be pleased to state: -

- (a) whether the Government has reduced funding for educational schemes aimed at tribal and minority students in the Union Budget 2025 and if so, the reasons therefor along with the manner in which the Government justifies such reductions;
- (b) the specific measures being taken to ensure that the education needs of tribal and minority students are not compromised despite the budget cuts;
- (c) the manner in which the Government is addressing the potential impact on access to quality education for these communities;
- (d) whether the Government has conducted any assessment on the effect of these budget cuts on the educational attainment of tribal and minority students and if so, the details and findings thereof; and
- (e) the alternative mechanisms implemented to support the education of tribal and minority students during the current financial year?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a) to (e): Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing the following Scholarship Schemes to promote and encourage basic and higher education amongst ST population.

- i) Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students (Class IX and X)
- ii) Post Matric Scholarship for ST students (Class XI and above)
- iii) National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education for STs
 - (a) National Fellowship for ST students (NFST)
 - (b) National Scholarship for Higher Education (Top Class)
- iv) National Overseas Scholarship for ST students.

For the Centrally Sponsored Schemes(Sr no-i & ii) of Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students ₹12516.70 crore was sanctioned for the Finance Commission Cycle from 2021-22 to 2025-26. However, total expenditure incurred by Ministry is ₹10577.91 crore till F.Y. 2024-25 (as on 24.03.2025). Thus, only Rs.1938.79 crore is available for FY 2025-26 and the Ministry has already initiated revised EFC proposal of an additional allocation of Rs.1983.67 crore for FY 2025-26 under Post-Matric Scholarship scheme for ST students.

Further, for the Central Sector Schemes (Sr No. iii and iv) of National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education and National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) for ST students ₹755 crore was sanctioned for the Finance Commission Cycle from 2021-22 to 2025-26. However, total expenditure incurred by Ministry is ₹756.95 crore till F.Y. 2024-25 (as on 24.03.2025). Notably, the Ministry has spent five-year budget within four years due to increase in number of scholars under National Scholarship (Top Class) being the open-ended scheme and enhancement of fellowship amount by UGC under National Fellowship. This has resulted in budget provision of less amount for FY 2025-26. To address the funding shortfall, the Ministry has already initiated revised EFC proposal for an additional allocation of ₹ 220 crore for FY 2025-26 under National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education for ST students and ₹9.95 crore under National Overseas Scholarship Scheme.

Further, Ministry of Minority Affairs has intimated that it implements various schemes for socio-economic empowerment of the six (6) centrally notified minority communities including various educational empowerment Schemes such as (i) Pre-Matric, (ii) Post-Matric and (iii) Merit-cum-Means based scholarships which are implemented across the country covering rural as well as urban areas. The reason for reduction in the budget is attributed to the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which makes it obligatory for the Government to provide free and compulsory elementary education (classes I to VIII) to each and every child. Accordingly, Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme has been restricted to students studying in classes IX and X. Similarly, considering the overlap of Maulana Azad National Fellowship and Padho Pardesh interest subsidy scheme for overseas studies, with similar schemes of other Ministries/ Departments, the schemes have been discontinued. Moreover, the schemes have not been approved for implementation for the year 2024-25. Therefore, the budget allocation in the Union Budget for 2025-26 has been reduced.

Further, the Government has undertaken several steps to encourage education among the children of minority communities across the country for socio-economic and educational empowerment of the notified minority communities and as a result to reduce the dropout rate various scholarship schemes have been implemented, viz. Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme was approved in January 2008 for class I-X and was applicable upto 2021-22, Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme was launched in November 2007 for class XIth to Ph.D. and Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Scheme was launched in the year 2007 for Technical and Professional Courses at under graduate/post graduate level. A very large number of students from minority communities have benefited through these programmes. In all these schemes, 30% Scholarships have been earmarked for girl students of minority community. So far, a total of 8.30 crore scholarships have been awarded to minority students.

In addition, the Govt. 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 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.
