GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2691
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2026

WELFARE OF SC/ST/OBC, DIVYANGJAN AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

2691. DR. ALOK KUMAR SUMAN:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of welfare schemes for SC/ST/OBC communities;

(b) the steps taken for empowerment of Divyangjans;

(c) the manner in which social security schemes are being expanded;

(d) the details of welfare schemes for senior citizens; and

(e) the policy of the Government to ensure social equality in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a): The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment implements various schemes for the welfare and socio-economic empowerment of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) such as Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs and Others, Post-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs, Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM–YASASVI), Venture Capital Fund (VCF) etc. The details of the schemes for SCs and OBCs are attached at **Annexure I**.

Further, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements several major schemes for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Tribes in the country which include Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), Pre-Matric Scholarship for STs, Post-Matric Scholarship for STs, Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), PM-JANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjan Jati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan), PM-JANMAN — Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs), Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM), Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution, National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), Grant-in-Aid to Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations working for ST welfare, Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs), Tribal Research, Information Education, Communication and Events (TRI-ECE) scheme, Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA). The details of the schemes for Scheduled Tribes are attached at **Annexure II.**

(b): The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, which came into force on 19.04.2017. The no. of disabilities has been increased from 7 to 21. The said Act provides rights and entitlements to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), which, *inter alia* include right to equality, non-discrimination, protection from cruelty, exploitation, right to live with family and community, access to justice, accessibility, legal capacity, legal guardianship, health, education, employment, skill development, arts, sports, recreation, culture and participation in decision making process.

Section 34 of the said Act provides for 4% reservation in government employment to persons with benchmark (40% or above) disabilities. Further, Section 32 of the said Act provides 5% reservation in government or government-aided higher educational institutions for persons with benchmark disabilities. Furthermore, Section 37 of the said Act ensures 5% reservation in poverty alleviation and developmental schemes to persons with benchmark disabilities.

Though, relief to the disabled is a State subject by virtue of entry 9 of the State List of the Constitution of India, the Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments, regarding educational and employment based support, through its major schemes namely Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS), Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP), Scholarship Schemes and Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA). There are no State / Union Territory-wise budgetary allocations. The schemes are demand-driven, and funds are disbursed as per actual demand.

(c): Ministry of Rural Development implements National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), which is a social security programme for the most vulnerable persons of our society living below poverty line, both in rural and urban areas irrespective of the category of the beneficiaries. NSAP caters to 3.09 crore BPL beneficiaries with a scheme-wise ceiling/ cap for each State/UT on the number of beneficiaries. In addition to the central assistance, the States/UTs are encouraged to provide top up amount. At present, the States/ UTs are providing top up amount ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5700 per month per beneficiary under pension schemes of NSAP leading to an average monthly pension of Rs. 1100 in many States /UTs. The states have option to provide financial assistance from their own sources in case there are more eligible beneficiaries. As per information received from States/UTs, about 5.86 crore additional beneficiaries are assisted through State pension schemes.

(d): For the Welfare of Senior Citizens, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing an umbrella scheme, namely Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) with effect from 01.04.2021 across the country. The details of the scheme are given at **Annexure III.**

(e): The Government is striving to ensure social equality and implements a range of schemes aimed at improving access to education, skill development, entrepreneurship, livelihoods, scholarships, housing, healthcare, and social security for vulnerable communities, with the objective of promoting social equality and ensuring inclusive development across all sections of society.

Annexure-I

The details of schemes are running for the welfare of Scheduled Caste and OBC are as under:

(I) Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs and Others: Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs and Others is a Centrally Sponsored scheme with the objective of promoting literacy and uninterrupted education at the Pre-Matric level for children belonging to Scheduled Castes and children of parents/guardian who are engaged in unclean and hazardous occupations. This scheme has two components, which are as follows:

Component 1: Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC students

- The students should be studying in class IX and X on a full- time basis.
- They should belong to Scheduled Castes.
- Their Parent/Guardian's income should not exceed Rs. 2.50 lakh per annum.

Component 2: The Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of Parents Engaged in Unclean and Hazardous Occupations

- The students should be studying in classes I to X on a full-time basis.
- Scholarship will be admissible to the children/wards of parents/guardians who, irrespective of their caste/religion belong to one of the following categories:
  - Persons who are Manual Scavengers as defined under section 2(I) (g) of Manual Scavengers Act 2013
  - Tanners & Flayers;
  - Waste pickers and
  - Persons engaged in hazardous cleaning as defined in Section 2(I) (d) of Manual Scavengers Act 2013.
- There is no family income ceiling under this component of the Scheme.

(II) Post-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SCs: -

The Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students (PMS-SC) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with an objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Caste students and to appreciably increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC students in higher education with a focus on those from the poorest households.

- The scholarship is for studies in India only.
- Scheduled Castes students whose parent/guardian's income does not exceed Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum are eligible.

(III) Pradhan Mantri Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM–YASASVI) for the welfare of OBC, EBC & DNT Students with following scholarship components: -

(i) Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students;

(ii) Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students;

(iii) Construction of Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls;

(iv)Central Sector Scheme of Top Class Education in Schools for OBC, EBC and DNT Students; and

(v) Central Sector Scheme of Top Class Education in Colleges for OBC, EBC and DNT Students.

Under the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship components, States/UTs are the implementing agency, with funding shared between the Centre and States in a 60:40 ratio (90:10 for North Eastern and Himalayan States, and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature)

Under Top Class Education in Schools and Top Class Education in Colleges are Central Sector schemes implemented directly by the Ministry. Under these components, scholarship amounts — covering tuition fee, hostel/academic charges, living expenses, books and stationery, and computer/laptop assistance, as applicable — are credited directly into the bank account of eligible applicants or **institutions** through DBT, based on merit-cum-means criteria and slot allocation notified annually.

The Construction of Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls scheme provides hostel facilities to students of socially and educationally backward classes, particularly from rural and remote areas, enabling them to pursue secondary and higher education at institutions located at a reasonable distance. It targets students who otherwise discontinue studies due to non-availability of nearby institutions or affordable hostel accommodation. Central assistance is shared with States at 60:40 for boys' hostels and 90:10 for girls' hostels (100% for UTs and NIRF-ranked institutions).

Currently, the above-mentioned Schemes are under revision. The revision of Schemes is done in consultation with all the concerned stakeholders as per the laid down procedure.

(IV) Venture Capital Fund (VCF)

- Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC): The scheme is operational and continues to provide concessional financial assistance to eligible SC entrepreneurs for establishing and expanding enterprises. The fund supports innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment generation among SC beneficiaries. As per the latest available information, sanctions and disbursements under the scheme are continuing.

- Venture Capital Fund for Backward Classes (VCF-BC): The scheme is also operational for eligible OBC entrepreneurs and facilitates concessional financial support for viable business ventures to promote self-employment and economic empowerment.

As on date, sanctions amounting to ₹633.58 crore have been accorded under the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC) and the Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubator Mission (ASIIM), covering 255 companies. Further, under the Venture Capital Fund for Backward Classes (VCF-BC), sanctions amounting to ₹145.58 crore have been accorded to 20 companies. Further, disbursements amounting to ₹459.63 crore have been made under VCF-SC and ASIIM to 222 companies, while ₹72.73 crore has been disbursed under VCF-BC to 20 companies.

(V) VISVAS (Vanchit Ikai Samooh aur Vargon ki Aarthik Sahayata) Scheme (An Interest Subvention Scheme)

The VISVAS (Vanchit Ikai Samooh aur Vargon ki Aarthik Sahayata) Scheme is under implementation for eligible Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) beneficiaries through the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC). The Scheme provides interest subvention of up to 5% per annum on eligible income-generating loans availed by individuals and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through eligible lending institutions, thereby reducing the cost of credit and facilitating access to affordable finance for the target beneficiaries.
The Scheme is presently being implemented through 40 banking partners, including Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks. Since its launch in 2024-25, interest subvention has been extended to approximately 3.91 lakh beneficiaries as on date, comprising around 2.39 lakh individual beneficiaries and 1.52 lakh SHG beneficiaries. Further, loans amounting to approximately ₹5,663 crore have been sub-vented under the Scheme, in accordance with the prescribed guidelines, for eligible income-generating activities undertaken by beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements several major schemes for the welfare and development of the Scheduled Tribes in the country.

(i) Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) — Objective: to provide quality residential education, up to Class XII and on par with Navodaya Vidyalayas, to ST students, with one school envisaged for every block having more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons. Status: against a target of 728 schools, 479 are functional, with cumulative enrolment rising from 92,075 (2020-21) to 1,38,336 (2024-25).

(ii) Pre-Matric Scholarship for STs — Objective: financial assistance to ST students studying in Classes IX and X to reduce drop-out and encourage continuation of schooling.

(iii) Post-Matric Scholarship for STs — Objective: financial assistance to ST students pursuing post-matriculation and post-secondary studies to enable completion of higher education.

(iv) Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY) / erstwhile Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS) — Objective: additive Central Assistance to States to fill critical gaps in infrastructure and livelihood in villages with significant ST population, through Village Development Plans (VDPs). Status: covers 36,428 identified villages;

(v) PM-JANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjan Jati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan) — Objective: launched on 15.11.2023 for saturation of basic facilities among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) through convergence of 9 line Ministries, including provision of Multi-Purpose Centres (MPCs) for livelihood and skill infrastructure.

(vi) PM-JANMAN — Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) — Objective: livelihood and skill-training centres for PVTG beneficiaries, centred on minor forest produce (MFP)-based value addition. Status: 540 VDVKs sanctioned, benefiting 46,042 persons;

(vii) Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) — Van Dhan Vikas Kendras — Objective: promotion of MFP-based livelihoods for tribal gatherers through Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (value-addition and processing clusters) under the Van Dhan Yojana component of PMJVM. Status: 4,172 VDVKs sanctioned, benefiting 12,48,067 members;

(viii) Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) — Objective: dedicated support for the socio-economic development of the 75 identified PVTGs, covering habitat, health, education, and livelihood needs.

(ix) Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution — Objective: Constitutional grant-in-aid to States for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and for raising the level of administration of Scheduled Areas to that of the rest of the State.

(x) National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) — Objective: apex financial institution providing concessional credit for livelihood and income-generating activities to ST beneficiaries below double the poverty line.

(xi) Grant-in-Aid to Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations working for ST welfare — Objective: financial assistance to voluntary organisations undertaking educational, health, and livelihood activities for Scheduled Tribes.

(xii) Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) — Objective: assistance to State Tribal Research Institutes for research, documentation, and capacity-building on tribal issues, to inform policy-making.

(xiii)Tribal Research, Information Education, Communication and Events(TRI-ECE) scheme -The Scheme provides for recognition of reputed universities, national institutions and organisations as Centre of Excellence(CoEs) for undertaking specialized research, documentation, evaluation of tribal welfare programmes and capacity-building initiatives. The studies cover diverse thematic areas, including tribal livelihoods, health and nutrition, traditional healing practices, education, digital inclusion, customary laws, and documentation of tribal art, culture, oral traditions and languages. The Scheme also supports Information, and awareness initiatives, and grants-in aid for research and documentation projects.

(xiv) Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) — Objective: launched in 2024, subsuming PMAAGY, for holistic and saturation-mode development of tribal-majority villages and habitations across the country through convergence of 17 Ministries/Departments and 25 interventions covering over 63,000 villages.

Annexure III

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is already implementing an umbrella scheme, namely Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) with effect from 01.04.2021 for the Welfare of Senior Citizens across the country. The scheme has following seven components:

Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC) - Grant-in-aid is provided to Non-Governmental/ Voluntary Organisations for running and maintenance of Senior Citizens Homes (old age homes), Continuous Care Homes, etc. Facilities like shelter, nutrition, medicare and entertainments are provided free of cost to indigent senior citizens.

State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC) – Under State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC), the State Government implements the State Action Plan for welfare of senior citizens. Grant in-aid is provided to States/ UTs for activities like awareness generation, sensitization, cataract surgeries and State specific activities.

Elderline: National Helpline for Senior Citizens (NHSC) - Elderline is a toll- free number (14567) operating for 12 hours a day (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM) that provides free Information, Guidance, Emotional Support and Field Intervention in cases of abuse and rescues in order to improve the quality of life of senior citizens. This helpline was dedicated to the Nation on 01.10.2021 by Hon'ble Vice President of India. As per the Scheme Guidelines, the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) is the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) for Elder Line.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) -The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the scheme component of 'Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)' with the objective to provide to senior citizens, with the monthly income of not more than Rs. 15000/- and suffering from age-related disabilities/infirmities, with such physical aids and assisted living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions. The scheme was launched on 01.04.2017. The Scheme is implemented through the 'Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)', (a Central Public Sector Undertaking under the M/oSJE) as the sole implementing Agency.

Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE) - SAGE scheme Component is to promote out-of-the-box and innovative solutions for the commonly faced problems. Under this scheme component, innovative start-ups are identified and encouraged for developing products, processes and services for the welfare of the elderly. The selection of the start-ups is made through a transparent process and the funds are provided as equity, subject to the Government investment not exceeding 49 % of the total equity of the Firm.

Training of Geriatric Care Givers - The main objective of this scheme component is to bridge the gap in supply and increasing demand in the field of geriatric caregivers so as to provide more professional services to the senior citizens and also to create a cadre of professional givers in the field of geriatrics.

Other Initiatives for Senior Citizens: In order to solve the problems of healthy and productive ageing, several initiatives are being done across the country. The proposed initiatives are aimed at involving the elders in building up knowledge which can be useful for the society as a whole.

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