

WELFARE OF THE WEAKER SECTIONS, AND IN PARTICULAR, OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

(Item No.27)

01. The total population in Tamil Nadu is 558.59 lakhs as per 1991 census, of which, the Scheduled Caste population is 107.12 lakhs and that of Scheduled Tribes is 5.74 lakhs which works out to 19.18 per cent and 1.03 per cent respectively. The State Government have introduced a number of schemes for the upliftment of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Communities by promoting their educational opportunities. Scholarships, educational loans, supply of uniforms, text books and note books, running of separate schools at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels, residential schools, special coaching facilities and the running of free hostels are among the various measures now in operation in Tamil Nadu. In the multifaceted strategy for the upliftment of Adi Dravidars adopted in this State, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes receive benefits from the schemes implemented under various general sectors like Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Co-operation, Industries, Employment, Rural Development etc. in addition to schemes implemented by the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department. The two instruments viz., the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and the Tribal Sub Plan for Scheduled Tribes ensure the flow of benefits to them from the development departments.

02. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 was enacted to ensure justice and equality among all sections of the community. In Tamil Nadu, 25 mobile squads, 4 special Sessions Courts and 8 prosecuting squads are functioning to administer the Act properly and effectively.

03. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 is being implemented vigorously in Tamil Nadu. The freed bonded labourers are rehabilitated by extending the following benefits: (1) Provision of house sites and cultivable lands, (2) Provision of milch animals, poultry units, plough bulls etc., and (3) Supply of Gem-cutting, stone cutting, agricultural instruments etc.

04. There are 1017 schools for Scheduled Castes and 224 for Scheduled Tribes, where 2.38 lakh students are studying. Besides, 25.17 lakhs Scheduled Caste and 1.12 lakhs Scheduled Tribe children are studying in the schools run by the Education Department, Local Bodies and Private management in Tamil Nadu. Hostel facilities are also provided for the students who attend schools, colleges and Industrial Training Institutes. At present there are 968 hostels for Scheduled Caste and 26 for Scheduled Tribe students.

05. Upto 1988-89, Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing Development Corporation has constructed 78,673 houses for Adi Dravidars. From 1989 to 1996, 2,56,528 houses were constructed by Rural Development Department with JVVVT funds.

06. The Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation was started on 15.2.1974 with the main object to promote the standard of living of Adi Dravidar families. The main objectives of the Corporation are: (i) To provide housing facilities to Adi Dravidars in the State of Tamil Nadu, (ii) To undertake construction of buildings for hostels, schools, community halls, balwadies etc. for Adi Dravidars, (iii) To implement Economic Development Scheme to benefit the Adi Dravidars to lift them above the poverty line and (iv) To undertake any specific item of work relating to the upliftment of Adi Dravidars, entrusted to the Corporation by the Government from time to time.

State Financial Support:

07. For the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the allocation of funds by the State Government during the past three years is given below:

Programme	1994-95 Actuals	1995-96 R.E.	1996-97 Revised B.E.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	(Rs. in lakhs)		
Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Total)	18259.79	22066.26	24757.36
Of which			
(a) Scheduled Castes			
1. Education	7205.39	8944.62	9585.57
2. Economic Development	103.40	175.54	177.84
3. Health and Housing	3931.38	6594.85	7040.60
4. Special Central Assistance for Scheduled Castes Component Plan	3816.24	3174.85	4616.83
(b) Scheduled Tribes			
1. Education	519.03	598.92	625.56
2. Economic Development	3.44	4.46	4.59
3. Health and Housing	42.20	41.63	28.44
4. Tribal Area Sub Plan	734.12	693.13	694.00
(c) Other Expenditure (Combined)	1904.59	1838.26	1983.93

08. The additional fund allocation for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Decentralised District Plan during 1993 - 94 was Rs.102.65 lakhs.

Panchayat Raj Institutions:

09. In spite of the efforts in the provision of educational and housing facilities and economic development programmes, much remains to be done both quantitatively and qualitatively to improve the lot of Adi dravidar and Tribal members of the community. Mere administrative machinery will not be sufficient since the problems of this section of the society are complex and without the full support and efforts of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, we cannot hope to achieve the aim of social justice within a reasonable time period. While the overall planning and monitoring should be done at the district level, the implementation should be at the Village Panchayat and Panchayat Union levels. The plans drawn by the State level machinery, that is, both Directorate and Corporation, should reflect the demands of the Adi-dravidars and Tribals as emerging at District level, through District Planning Committee.

10. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments envisage entrustment of powers and responsibilities to Panchayat Raj Institutions in respect of 29 items of which "Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes" is item number 27. With the aim of rendering effective welfare and rehabilitation services to Adi dravidars, tribals, bonded labourers and scavengers, the State Planning Commission Group has recommended the entrustment of the following powers and responsibilities among the three tiers of Panchayat Raj Institutions.

I. VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> (1)	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> (2)
1. Educational Development for Adi-Dravidar and Tribals.	i) Conduct a survey about the levels of literacy and education of all Adi-Dravidars and tribals, document the data and forward to Panchayat Unions.

<i>ACTIVITY</i> (1)	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> (2)
2. Housing facilities and land acquisition for house sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Assist in the measures to reduce drop-outs by ensuring the provision of various incentives. iii) Assist the rural level functionaries in providing health care needs of school children. iv) Arrange for special coaching to students with low percentage of marks. v) Ensure provision of incentives to students; promote literacy among tribal girls in low literacy pockets. vi) Ensure provision of basic amenities and infrastructural facilities to schools and residential schools such as toilets with water facility, drinking water supply, class rooms, furniture, teaching aids, science labs and equipments. vii) Identify Adi-draavidar and Tribal students in Panchayat village for vocational training and send the list to Panchayat Union and to the concerned authorities. viii) Identify the need for opening of schools or hostels; upgradation of schools, construction of school and hostel building and report to Panchayat Union Council and District Adi-Draavidar Welfare Officer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Take stock of the existing position relating to allotment of house sites, houses provision of basic amenities to adi-draavidar habitations and identify the gaps and forward the information to Panchayat Union. ii) Ensure the provision of water supply, sanitation, electricity and roads to Adi-Draavidar colonies and habitations. iii) Assist Panchayat Union to identify housing sites and construction of Government supported/subsidised houses.
3. Economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in the selection of beneficiaries for getting subsidy and loan. ii) Assist in the identification of families among Adi-draavidars and Tribals for assistance under self-employment, individual entrepreneurship, and group activities. iii) Assist in the implementation of sectoral schemes under special component plan; ensure that amount provided under this plan is properly utilised for the benefit of Adi-draavidars and review the progress of the schemes periodically.
4. Eradication of untouchability and curbing the atrocities against Adi-draavidars and Tribals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Report to the police for necessary action when following discriminatory practices are noticed in the matter of accessibility to common drinking water source, burial ground, using separate utensils in village tea stalls, entering places of worship, refusal to offer services by barber and washermen and taking marriage procession. ii) Assist in distributing copies of 'The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955' and 'The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989' translated in regional language. iii) Mobilise the community support in the elimination of untouchability.

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
	iv) Assist in ensuring physical possession of the lands distributed to the SCs/STs under the land ceiling laws.
	v) Ensure that the Adi-dravidars are not forced to perform undignified traditional occupations like lifting of carcasses, beating of drums, digging of burial pits etc.
	vi) Assist in ensuring that tribals are not harassed by the forest officials while collecting minor forest produce, fuel-wood etc.
5. Rehabilitation of bonded labourers.	i) Undertake surveys to assess the magnitude of bonded labour in the village.
	ii) Ensure the enforcement of the provision of The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976.
6. Rehabilitation of scavengers and their dependents.	i) Conduct survey for identification of scavengers and their dependents with the help of voluntary organisations.
	ii) Assist in liberating them from the work of removing night soil and in rehabilitating them by ensuring financial assistance for various activities.

II. PANCHAYAT UNION

<i>ACTIVITY</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> <i>(2)</i>
1. Educational development for Adi-dravidars and Tribals.	i) Collect the Survey reports about the levels of education among Adi-dravidars and Tribals from the village panchayat, consolidate them and forward to District Pan-chayat.
	ii) Supervise and monitor the timely supply of textbooks, uniforms and scholarships, provision of incentives to students and Headmasters and special coaching to students.
	iii) Review the performance of the students and improve their educational standards: monitor the improvement in the quality of education at all levels.
	iv) Monitor and supervise the provision of basic amenities and infrastructural facilities to schools, residential schools and hostels.
	v) Conduct periodical review meetings, identify the gaps and suggest corrective measures.
2. Housing facilities and land acquisition for house sites.	i) Undertake the construction of houses under Government sponsored/subsidised/supported schemes.
	ii) Review and coordinate the activities of various departments in the provision of house sites, facilities and amenities.
3. Economic development.	i) Ensure and supervise the provision of subsidy and loan facilities for various economic activities, assistance for self-employment etc.
	ii) Prepare tribal development programmes for family oriented activities and infras-structure development schemes at the Block/ITDP level

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Supervise the implementation of SC/ST components of self-employment, wage employment, rural sanitation programmes etc. and fund utilisation. iv) Conduct periodical review meetings, identify deficiencies and take corrective measures.
4. Training and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in the training programmes and special coaching for Adi-draavidars and Tribals at the block level. ii) Conduct periodical review meetings to assess the impact of the training pro-grammes.
5. Eradication of untouchability and curbing the atrocities against Adi-draavidars and Tribals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Organise camps to create awareness about the provisions of The Protection of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. ii) Ensure celebration of Removal of untouchability week' on 2nd October every year. iii) Assist the victims in getting legal aid. iv) Give wide publicity about the provisions of The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989'.
6. Rehabilitation of bonded labourers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Collect the survey reports from village panchayat on Bonded Labour, consolidate them and forward to District Panchayat. ii) Monitor the implementation of the reha-bilitative measures for bonded labourers as per the provisions of The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and render necessary assistance to Village Panchayat.
7. Rehabilitation of scavengers and their dependents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Supervise and monitor the implementation of rehabilitative measures taken at the village level. ii) Conduct review meetings to assess the flow of benefits to scavengers and their dependents.

III. DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> <i>(2)</i>
1. Planning for welfare of Adi-draavidars and Tribals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Collect the documented data, survey and investigation reports from the Panchayat Union connected with the Adidraavidars and Tribals, Bonded Labourers and scavengers and prepare Annual Reports. ii) Prepare Annual Status Paper on the Welfare of Adi-draavidars and Tribals, Bonded labourers and scavengers. iii) Provide planning/technical guidance to village panchayat/ panchayat union. iv) Take steps to solicit the ideas and help from the elected representatives for expansion of activities and social audit on the utilisation of services for Adi-draavidars and Tribals, Bonded labourers and scavengers. v) Create a data base at the district level and develop a Management Information system for Adi-draavidars and Tribals development plan.

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
2. Educational Development of Adi-Dravidars and Tribals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Prepare Annual Reports on the educational status of the Adi-dravidars and Tribals. ii) Monitor all the activities in the provision of educational facilities of Adi-dravidars and Tribals. iii) Conduct periodical review meetings to identify the gaps and take corrective measures.
3. Housing facilities and land acquisition for house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor provision of housing and house site facilities to Adi-dravidars and Tribals and basic amenities to their habitations. ii) Monitor the coordination of various departments in the provision of facilities and amenities.
4. Economic Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor the economic activities and employment facilities provided to Adi- dravidars and Tribals and primitive tribes and assist in the tie-up arrangements. ii) Monitor the implementation of special component plan of all divisible sectors of development. iii) Conduct periodical review meetings, identify deficiencies and take corrective measures.
5. Training and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor the implementation of training programmes and special coaching.
6. Eradication of untouchability and curbing the atrocities against Adi-dravidars and Tribals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor the activities of the Panchayat Union relating to the eradication of untouchability and curbing the atrocities against Adi-dravidars and Tribals. ii) Conduct review meetings about the measures taken and suggest corrective steps.
7. Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Consolidate the survey reports from the Panchayat Union and forward to Govt. ii) Monitor the implementation of the rehabilitative measures for bonded labourers as per the provisions of 'The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976' and assist the Panchayat Union. iii) Conduct review meetings to identify the gaps and suggest corrective steps.
8. Rehabilitation of scavengers and their dependents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor the welfare and rehabilitative measures for the scavengers taken at the Panchayat Union level.

Administrative, Financial and Legal Implications:

11. At present, at the district level, the District Adi-dravidar Welfare officers are implementing the schemes for Adi-dravidars and Tribals and at the State level, a separate Directorate and a Corporation are dealing with Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare socio-economic development and welfare programmes. The State level machinery, i.e. both Directorate and Corporation, should respond to the demands of the Adi-dravidars and Tribals in the rural areas. While the implementation of programmes may be done by the Panchayat Raj Institutions, the technical help has to be provided by the Directorate and financial assistance by the Corporation. However, if for any reason, any of the Welfare schemes relating to the Adi-dravidars and Tribals is retained for district implementation by the administrative Department at the State level or by the Corporation, then full information in respect of these schemes should be provided to the District Panchayats and Panchayat Unions and the latter should have the power to carry out periodical

review of the schemes under Section 114 (2) of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994. A scheme of annual incentives may be introduced by way of additional development assistance to those panchayats where peace and harmony prevail throughout the year and where there are no atrocities or gross discrimination against Adi-dravidars and Tribals making it unnecessary to invoke 'The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

12. In implementing these, care should be taken that the Special Component Plan and Integrated Tribal Development Programme allocation are kept earmarked for the respective communities to enhance their confidence; and adjustments, if any, are made with the concerned of the Adi dravidar/ Tribal representatives in the Panchayats. This matter could be reviewed by the Government before the end of the Ninth Plan.