

Standing Committee Report Summary

Educational Schemes for Tribals

- The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Chairperson: Mr. Ramesh Bais) submitted its report on 'Educational Schemes for Tribals' on January 3, 2018.
 - **Performance of existing schemes:** The Committee noted that despite many educational schemes for tribals in the country, the literacy rate of tribals (59%) is far below the national literacy rate (74%). Reasons highlighted for it include: (i) poor economic conditions of Scheduled Tribes (ST), (ii) considerable distance between home and school (especially for secondary education and above), and (iii) lack of awareness about the long-term value of formal education. The Committee observed that efforts made by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs through Ashram Schools, Pre-Matric Scholarships, and Post-Matric Scholarships for ST students have not yielded the desired results in improving their education status. It noted that the schemes being implemented lack conviction and supervision. The Committee recommended a more committed approach by the Ministry for the implementation of the schemes.
 - **Development of bilingual primers:** Bilingual primers are meant to contain text in regional and tribal languages to facilitate learning (reading and writing) in schools in tribal areas. The Committee observed the slow development of bilingual primers and recommended that the Ministry must pursue the matter with the states.
 - **Status of hostels:** The Committee observed that there are 1,470 functional hostels in the country for ST students. Such hostels seek to provide accommodation to ST students who would otherwise have been unable to continue their education due to economic reasons. The Committee noted that hostels have poor building structure and sub-standard quality of food. The Committee also noted that since substantial amount of Ministry's money has gone into building these hostels and other infrastructure, they must be properly monitored for them to run well.
- the operation and maintenance of these schools. According to the Committee, this delegation of maintenance of ashram schools to state governments has resulted in the poor condition of these schools. The Committee recommended putting in place a mechanism to ensure that the schools adhere to the laid down parameters and have regular monitoring by the states.
- **(ii) The Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** The Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme provides financial assistance to ST students pursuing post-matric courses in recognised institutions. The Committee noted that most of the state governments are reluctant to bear their share of liabilities related to the funds of the scheme. This leads to difficulties for ST students in continuing their education.
 - **(iii) The Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** The Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme is for tribal students studying in classes 9 and 10. The Committee noted that from 2014-15 to 2017-18, funds have not been released to certain states under the scheme. The Committee observed that the lack of determination on the part of the Ministry has led to such negligence in disbursal of grants.
 - **(iv) Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):** EMRS are set up with a capacity of 480 students per school to provide quality middle and high level education to ST students. Establishment of EMRS is demand driven based on the proposals received from states. The funding of such schools is from the state governments. The Committee noted that most of the EMRS are not running well, have poor infrastructure, and inadequate teaching staff. The Committee recommended that the Ministry must devise a mechanism that will help uplift the standard of these schools and make them properly functional.
 - **(v) National Overseas Scholarship Scheme:** The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme provides financial assistance to 20 students selected for pursuing higher studies abroad for Ph.D. and post-doctoral studies. The Committee observed that over the years, the number of students receiving this scholarship has been declining. It stated that this might be due to the lack of awareness about the scheme among students. In this context, the Committee stated that proper guidance and publicity are key for any scheme to be successful.

Performance of specific schemes

- **(i) Scheme for the establishment of Ashram schools:** The Scheme for the establishment of Ashram schools in tribal sub-plan areas is a centrally sponsored scheme for construction of all girls' Ashram Schools and boys' Ashram Schools in certain extremism affected areas. States are responsible for

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