

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)

- The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Chair: Mrs. Rama Devi) submitted its report on ‘Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) for SC boys and girls’ on December 2, 2021. BJRCY is a centrally sponsored scheme for the construction of hostels for students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC). Under the scheme, central assistance is provided for construction of new hostel buildings, expansion of existing hostel facilities for SC students, and repair and maintenance of operational hostels. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
  - **Status of hostels and hostel infrastructure:** The Committee noted that from 2007-08 to 2020-21, 819 hostels were sanctioned under the scheme. Of these, 662 hostels (391 for girls, 271 for boys) have been completed, 144 are under construction, and 13 have been cancelled. Of the completed hostels, 366 (344 for girls, 22 for boys) are functional. The Committee observed that the scheme had failed to meet its objective of having a hostel in every block headquarter of low literacy districts.
  - The Committee further noted that states/UTs having a relatively larger SC population (such as Punjab and Bihar) had been sanctioned less hostels. It noted that the facilities available in hostels are not satisfactory. It recommended: (i) creation of a reliable database of hostels across the country, updated in real-time and monitored at the central level, (ii) conducting an assessment of required hostels in a time bound manner, and (iii) creation of an online portal for submitting proposals under BJRCY.
  - **Delay in constructing hostels:** BJRCY requires the construction of sanctioned hostels to be completed within a period of two years. The Committee observed that construction of many hostels has been inordinately delayed. It recommended the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to: (i) consider levying penalties for projects delayed beyond the specified period, and (ii) encourage the concerned state/UT governments to submit fresh proposals where hostels have been cancelled.
  - **Budgetary allocation:** From the financial year 2021-22, BJRCY has been merged with two other schemes of the central government, viz., the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), and the Special Central Assistance to the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCA to SCSP). These three schemes targeted at the SC population have been merged under a single scheme called the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY). The Committee observed that the budgetary allocation for PM-AJAY for 2021-22 (Rs 1,800 crore) has been reduced by Rs 160 crore, in comparison to the total allocation for the three merged schemes (considering the actual expenditure under BJRCY) in 2020-21. It also noted that the separate allocation for boys’ and girls’ hostels under BJRCY has been clubbed into a single reduced allocation since 2019-20.
  - The Committee was of the opinion that specific allocation for BJRCY should have been continued for its independent functioning without getting affected by other schemes. It asked the Department to justify through data that the new fund arrangement under PM-AJAY is successful for BJRCY. Further, it recommended that notional allocation be made for BJRCY under the PM-AJAY allocation, including separate allocation for boys’ and girls’ hostels. Noting that the scheme had not done well so far, the Committee recommended constituting a dedicated body for operating BJRCY (similar, for instance, to that in case of Kendriya Vidyalayas), especially since it will be fully funded by the central government under PM-AJAY.
  - **Monitoring and evaluation:** Instead of the present system of a Steering Committee (comprising persons such as ex-officio members from the Department) to regularly review progress under the scheme, the Committee recommended constitution of a dedicated Hostel Management/Monitoring Committee, and penal provisions for violating established norms. It also endorsed incorporation of NITI Aayog’s recommendations with regard to robust monitoring in the scheme guidelines (including submission of yearly action plans by implementing agencies regarding the maintenance of operational hostels).
  - **Re-examination of certain proposals/provisions under BJRCY:** The Committee recommended the Department to re-submit its proposal to set up residential schools for SC girls under BJRCY, which was not approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee under the Ministry of Finance during 2018-19. It also recommended re-examination of the provision for central assistance to private institutions and deemed universities (but not NGOs) under BJRCY, after detailed scrutiny of their credentials. Note that prior to the revision of BJRCY in 2018, such central assistance was available to NGOs, private institutions and deemed universities for expansion of hostels.

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