

ACCESS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND PROTECTION OF TRIBAL RIGHTS

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Replying to an unstarred question in Rajya Sabha today the Union Minister of State Shri. Durgadas Uikey said that The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) being the nodal Ministry for overall policy, planning and coordination of programs for development of STs is implementing various schemes for the welfare and development of STs. In order to provide Scheduled Tribes Access to basic services, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken various initiatives through multiple schemes like Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Awas Yojana (PM-JANMAN) and Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA).

PM-JANMAN is a transformative Policy level initiative which aims at fostering the holistic development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) across States and 1 Union Territory. With a budgetary outlay of ₹24,104 Crore (Central Share: ₹15,336 Crore and State Share: ₹8,768 Crore), PM-JANMAN, approved for 5 years, is designed to provide equitable access to essential services for PVTG communities, improving their living conditions and facilitating their socio-economic progress. The core objectives include providing safe housing, clean drinking water, access to education, healthcare, nutrition, road connectivity, electricity, and enhanced livelihood opportunities.

DA-JGUA is a multi-sectoral initiative, to ensure the holistic and sustainable development of tribal populations in villages. This ambitious program integrates schemes from 17 ministries, including MoTA, through 25 targeted interventions, focusing on saturating more than 63000 tribal majority villages with essential service infrastructure. The initiative aims to address key gaps in tribal villages with a focus on: Safe housing and clean drinking water, Improved sanitation and healthcare facilities, Enhanced access to quality education and nutrition, electricity supply and promotion of renewable energy sources, better road and telecom connectivity and sustainable livelihoods through convergence of relevant schemes of participating Ministries.

Apart from above, the details of few other schemes implemented by Ministry of Tribal Affairs for welfare and development of ST communities is at **Annexure-I**.

The Government of India is committed to the welfare of Scheduled Tribes. Funds are released for welfare of STs as per schematic procedures laid down in scheme guidelines. Schemes implemented by Ministry of Tribal Affairs with an aim to ensure that tribal communities are systematically included in relief, rehabilitation, and resilience-building efforts, with millions of beneficiaries and nationwide coverage across states. Also, The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes monitors safeguard and addresses complaints regarding denial of rights and relief.

The Government of India has instituted a multi-layered framework to address concerns raised by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on tribal rights. Legal safeguards, including the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, provide protection against victimization and ensure confidentiality of activists. Further, legal aid support is strengthened through initiatives such as the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) SAMVAD program launched in April 2025, which focuses on enhancing access to justice for marginalized and vulnerable Adivasis, as well as Denotified and Nomadic Tribes.

Further, transparent grievance redressal mechanisms, including Right to Information Act, 2005, Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) and Gram Sabha-led social audits, ensure accountability and help prevent administrative harassment while fostering a conducive working environment for CSOs working on tribal rights.

The Government reconciles its domestic policies on preventing discrimination with its stance on tribal issues by ensuring consistency between constitutional commitments, legislative frameworks, and international obligations.

At the domestic level, the Constitution of India guarantees equality before law (Article 14), prohibits discrimination (Article 15), and provides for affirmative action in favour of Scheduled Tribes (Article 46). These provisions are operationalized through legislations such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Forest Rights Act, 2006, which safeguard rights, dignity, and access to resources.

Further, The Government of India implements a range of constitutional safeguards, welfare schemes, and affirmative measures aimed at advancing the social, economic and educational development of Scheduled Tribes and preventing discrimination. These measures are periodically reviewed and strengthened in consultation with State Governments and other stakeholders.

At the international level, India engages with multilateral forums in a manner that reflects its constitutional values, national priorities, and developmental context. The Government presents its policies and experiences related to tribal welfare and inclusion, while emphasizing respect for sovereignty, diversity of approaches, and nation-determined solutions.

Taken together, the Government's domestic actions and international engagement are guided by the objective of ensuring inclusive growth, protection of tribal rights, and the promotion of equality, in line with constitutional principles and international commitments.

Annexure

Annexure I referred to in reply to part (a) of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 4215 for answer on 01.04.2026

Ministry is also implementing following schemes for welfare and development of tribal communities:-

'Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)': PMJVM envisions to strengthen tribal entrepreneurship initiatives and to facilitate livelihood opportunities by promoting more efficient, equitable, self-managed, optimum use of natural resources, Agri / NTFP / Non-farm enterprises. With a total financial outlay of Rs. 1612 crore for 5 years (2021-22 to 2025-26), there are 3 major components. The first component comprises "Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP), where in MSP is fixed for 87 MFPs. The 2nd component, Development of Value Chain for MFP", wherein Vandhan Kendras are set up. The 3rd component is "Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Products / Produce", where grants are given to Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), which is the nodal agency for implementation of the Scheme.

Pre-Matric Scholarship: It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented through respective State/UT administrations. This is an open-ended Scheme covering all students studying in Std. IXth&Xth, whose parental annual income is up to Rs. 2.50 lakhs. The contribution from Government of India is 75% and the state contribution is 25%. In respect of North East states and hilly states, the contribution from Government of India is 90% and the state contribution is 10%. In case of UTs like Andaman Nicobar without Legislative Assembly and own grants, Govt. of India's contribution is 100%.

Post Matric Scholarship: It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented through respective Ste/UT administrations. This is an open-ended Scheme covering all students studying in in class XI and above, whose parental annual income is up to Rs. 2.50 lakhs. The contribution from Government of India is 75% and the st contribution is 25%. In respect of North East states and hilly states, the contribution from Government of India is 90% and the state contribution is 10%. In case of UTs l Andaman & Nicobar without Legislative Assembly and own grants, Govt. of India's contribution is 100%.

Support to Tribal Research Institute (TRI): Under the schemes Support to TRIs funds are provided to the State governments / UTs research, documentation etc. based their proposal.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS): Introduced in the year 1997-98 to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribes (ST) students (Class 6th to 12th) in rem areas in 201819, Government revamped it as a central sector scheme by which EMRS is to be established in every block with 50% or more ST population and at le 20,000 tribal persons, have an EMRS. Accordingly, the target of establishing 728 EMRSs across the country has been set up which is likely to benefit more than 3.5 la ST children. National Education Society for Tribal (NESTS) an autonomous society has been established to administer the scheme. As on date, all schools have be sanctioned by the Ministry, out of which 477 are reported to be functional benefiting more than 1,30,000 ST children.

Grants under Proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution: Ministry of Tribal Affairs also provides funds to the State Governments under Grants under Proviso to Arti 275(1) of the Constitution. It is a 100% grant from Government of India. Funding under this programme is to enable the State to meet the cost of such schemes development as may be undertaken by the State for the purpose of promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in that State.

Grants-in-Aid to Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of STs: Financial assistance is provided to the Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of STs.

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