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Social-Welfare Measures for Children of Tribes in India

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KEYWORDS:

Introduction:

Government of India had set up separate Ministry to look after tribal affairs. It was instituted in 1993 and came into existence in October 1999 for promoting integrated socio-economic development of tribes. Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal Ministry for the policy, planning and coordination of programmes for development of tribes. Ministry of Tribal Affairs undertakes activities that flow from the subjects allocated under the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961. There are 16 social welfare schemes for the Tribes in India. Out of which 12 schemes are focusing on children and youth.

I. EDUCATION

1. Pre-Matric Scholarship: This scheme is effective from July 2012. Scholarship is provided to IX & X standard students by the government to applicant where she/he is domiciled. Her/his Parents/Guardian's income should not exceed Rs.2 lakhs p.a. She/he should be a regular, full time student studying in a school recognized by Govt. (v)Scholarship for studying in any class is available for only 10 months; Rs.150/month for days scholars and for hostellers Rs.350/month. If a student has to repeat a class, she/he would not get scholarship for that class for the subsequent year.
2. Post-Matric Scholarship: This scheme is effective from 1944-45. It provides financial assistance to students pursuing post-matriculation courses through recognized institutions whose annual family income is less than 2 lacs (Revised in 2010). Under the Scheme, Central assistance is provided on 100% basis to all States/UTs. Components of the Scheme include: (i) maintenance allowance (ii) reimbursement of non-refundable compulsory fee charged by educational institutions; (iii) Book Bank facility and (iv) certain other allowances like study tour charges, thesis printing/typing, allowances for students with disability(reader allowance for blind scholars, transport allowances, escort allowance for disabled students, helper allowance, coaching allowance to mentally retarded and mentally ill students. All children of the same parents/guardian are eligible. Students studying through correspondence courses are eligible. During the financial year 2012-13; an amount of Rs.483.43 crores has been released to cover 15 lakh students till date.
3. National Overseas Scholarships: Scholarship is awarded for higher studies abroad in specified field of Engineering, Technology and Science and covers cost of tuition fee and other educational expenses including maintenance, other grants and travel expenses for various courses at Masters' level, Ph. D. and Post-Doctoral level. Only one child of the same parents/guardians is eligible for this scholarship. This Scheme was introduced in 1954-55 and has since been revised from time to time. This was Non-Plan scheme, which became a Plan Scheme from 2007-08. Candidate should have 60% marks or equivalent grade in relevant degree for Master Degree, Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral Research. Age of the candidate should below 35 years. Total income from all sources of the employed candidates or his/her parents/guardian should not exceed Rs.25000-p.m
4. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship: To pursue higher studies such as M.Phil and Ph.D. It covers all Universities/Institutions recognized by the UGC. Fellowship under RGNF is on the pattern of UGC Fellowships awarded to research students pursuing regular and full time M. Phil and Ph.D courses. This scheme is in operation since 2005-06. UGC is a nodal agency for implementation of the Scheme. Total number of fellowships each year is 667. Fellowship for JRF is provided Rs.16000/-p.m and for SRF Rs.18000/-p.m. Contingency grant for Humanities and Social Science is Rs.10000/-p.a, for Science Rs.12000/- for two year and Rs.20500/-p.a rest of the period
5. Scholarship scheme of top class education: This scheme was introduced in 2007-08 to embolden tribal students for continuing studies at degree and Post-Graduate level in any of the 213 Institutes identified by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Maximum 625 scholarships would be provided per year all over India. Funding is provided to maximum 5 candidates in each identified institutes. Scholarship covers tuition fees, boarding and lodging expenses(Rs.2200p.m), book grant(Rs.3000 p.a) and one-time grant for purchase of a computer and its accessories(Rs.45000). Fund is released to the concerned Institution directly by the Ministry. 100% funded by the Ministry. During 11th Five Year Plan (2007-08 to 2011-12), 814 students were benefited. During the financial year 2012-13, 298 students benefited. Till 2012, the ministry had disbursed 20 crores under this scheme.
6. Up gradation of Merit for Tribal Students: by providing them remedial and special coaching in classes IX to XII. Remedial coaching aims at removing deficiencies in various subject, special coaching is provided with a view to prepare the students for competitive examinations for seeking entry into professional courses like Engineering and Medical disciplines. Last revision of the Scheme was made during 2008-09. A grant of Rs.11,500/- per students per year would be provided as under: Boarding & lodging charges Rs.7000(Rs.700x10 months), Pocket Money Rs.2,000 (200x10 months), Books and Stationery Rs.2,500/yr, and Rs.8,000/ year per student for honorarium to Principal, Experts and other incidental charges. Under this scheme, 30% reservation for girls and 3% for disabled tribals.
7. Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas (TSP): Ashram schools provide education with residential facilities. Scheme is in operation since 1990-91. Salient features are construction of Ashram schools for the primary, middle, secondary and senior secondary stages of education as well as upgradation of existing Ashram Schools for tribe boys and girls. 100% funding for establishment of Ashram schools in the naxal affected areas identified by Ministry of Home Affairs from time to time. All other Ashram schools for boys in TSP States are funded on 50:50 basis. 100% funding is provided to UTs. Financial assistance on 50:50 basis is given for other non-recurring items of expenditure i.e. purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishing, purchase of books for a library.
8. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS): EMRS aims to provide middle and high level education in remote areas.
9. Scheme of Strengthening Education among tribal girls: It aims to bridge the gap in literacy levels between the general female population and tribal women, through facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal girls in the identified 54 districts or Blocks, more particularly in naxal affected areas and in areas inhabited by Primitive Tribal Groups and reducing drop-outs at the elementary level. It is implemented in 54 identified

districts where the ST population is 25% or more and ST female literacy rate below 35%, as per 2001census. Any other tribal block in a district, other than aforesaid 54 identified districts, which has scheduled tribe population 25% or above and tribal female literacy rate below 35%(2001 census). State Governments are eligible to receive central assistance on 50:50 matching basis. Central Universities would be eligible for 90% financial assistance. Other Universities would be eligible on the basis of 45% central share, 45% State share and the remaining 10% to be borne by the Universities concerned themselves.

10. Scholarship for Commercial Pilot Course: Selection of 10 ST candidates would be carried out by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) through a written test. Income ceiling is 3.72 lacs/p.a.
11. Scheme of Coaching for Tribes: It was started during 4th plan period. Last revision was made during 1998-99. Coaching imparted for all the competitive examinations conducted by government.
12. Vocational Training: This scheme was introduced in 1992-93 revised in April 2009. Under this, grants is available for organizing vocational trainings in recognized institutes or in Vocational Training Centres (VTCs). Funding under this scheme are in two ways: (i) By setting up and running VTCs mainly in remote areas/rural areas deficient in facilities, (ii) By supporting vocational training for ST candidates in already existing institutions in townships/districts, such as Polytechnics, computer training centres, and other private recognized institutions subject to the maximum assistance of Rs.30,000/-p.a per trainee as per norms. Additional payment of annual rent as per actual subject to a limit of Rs. 10,000/- per month is admissible in case of rented building.

Other Social Welfare Schemes related to Children of Tribes:

1. National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC): This Corporation was set up in 2001. NSTFDC launched "Adivasi Shiksha Rrinn Yojana", an education loan scheme for Tribes. Under the scheme, financial assistance upto Rs.5 Lakhs is available for pursuing technical/ professional education including PhD in India.
2. Scheme of Grant-In-Aid to Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of Tribes: To enhance the reach of welfare schemes and fill the gaps in service deficient tribal areas, in the sectors such as education, health, drinking water, agro-horticultural productivity, social security.
3. National Tribal Awards: Two national tribal awards are instituted (1 male & female) to recognize their achievement and out-standing performance in the field of education, sports, culture, science, technology, bio-diversity conservation. Each Award would carry Rs.2 Lacs and a trophy.
4. National Award for Exemplary Community Service rendered to the tribes: This award would carry Rs.5 lacs.
5. Financial Assistance for support to Centers of Excellence: Scheme aims at supporting and strengthening active research by funding the Universities and Institutions, including NGOs, Registered Professional Organizations working in the fields of tribal development and research. Tribal Ministry has been funding short-term research and extension work among tribal communities in the country. It has been felt that such studies are not conducted on regular basis. In order to continue the research studies on regular basis, it has been considering for quite some time to identify institutes/organizations of Centre of Excellence to involve them for working out a long-term and policy oriented research studies for the development of tribals. Details of the areas in which financial assistance is provided were uploaded in website of the ministry.
6. Tribal Research Institutes: This scheme has three components (i) Grants to Tribal Research Institutes on 50:50 basis between State and Centre (ii) Award of Research Fellowship in various aspects is provided on 100% basis to the Institutes/Organizations for conducting research and evaluation studies, seminars/workshops and publication of literature. There are 16 Tribal Research Institutes in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura receiving Central Grant on 50:50 basis on plan scheme. There is one TRI located at Port Blair for which 100% Grant was given.
7. Tribal Research and Development Institute, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh: It was established in 1954, under the Department of Tribal Welfare in Madhya Pradesh. With an objectives to undertake Anthropological studies including social, economic and cultural issues, Traditional Knowledge System Survey; other surveys on communities, evaluation and impact assessment studies, documentation of the rich cultural heritage of tribes, creating awareness regarding sensitivity to tribal issues, Training of officials of development departments posted in Tribal areas, Museum of tribal artifacts, Research Fellowship, Organizing fair and festivals showcasing tribal culture. It has been declared as Nodal TRI to co-ordinate with the TRIs of Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh states.
8. Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad: In pursuance to the recommendations made by Dhebar Commission(1960-61) which emphasized the need for research and surveys in Tribal Areas, Government of India have sanctioned Training Institute at Hyderabad under Central Sector Scheme during Third Five Year Plan. TCR&TI was established during 1962-63.
9. Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkatnak, Madhya Pradesh: It came into existence by the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University Act, 2007 and came into action in 2008.
10. Institute of Tribal Studies, Himachal Pradesh: It came into existence in the year 1994 and started functioning in the year 1995. It offers one year post-Graduate diploma course in Tribal Studies.
11. Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, Arunachal Pradesh: It is affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University). This institute offers M.A, M.Phil and package courses in tribal studies.
12. TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai: It offers M.A Social Work in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action. Intake is 25 per year. This programme was started in 2006 and it would be based on theories, methods, skills and practice.

Issues in Implementing Welfare Schemes for Tribal Children: Ministry of Tribal affairs needs applause for their efforts to uplift the tribal community. Social Welfares are many but beneficiaries are few. Issues in implementing schemes are;

1. Problems in implementing the tribal welfare scheme for children and youth may be due to lack of awareness among them and due to their virtue of living in rural and remote areas.
2. Accessibility of Information of about welfare schemes to these areas is questionable.
3. Most of the tribal welfare schemes aimed at promoting education and employment. To be cognizant about the schemes one needs education or someone need to educate them. There are only few agencies which imparts awareness about the schemes.
4. Most of the Tribal Children do not have community certificate to avail the welfare schemes.
5. Almost all the education schemes aimed at promoting their education after 9th standard; real picture is majority of the tribal children do not continue their studies beyond primary school level. Alternative measures have to be taken out to address issues at grass root level and to promote their education beyond primary school level.
6. Many VAO's post are not filled in most of the tribal areas and even VAO's are posted; they are unreachable to the tribes who live in hill areas and remote areas and even if VAO's are reachable they are not fully aware of the welfare schemes.
7. Census 2001 revealed that 2 States (Punjab and Haryana) and 3 UTs (Puducherry, Delhi and Chandigarh), there were no tribal population. Subramaniyam & his team visited 150 villages in the four regions of the Pondicherry UT(Pondy, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe) and collected ethnographic data which helped in identifying the tribes. It was found that Pondicherry, Karaikal and Yanam had tribal population, Mahe had

none. Irula, Malaikuravan, Kattunayakan, Yerukula, Kuruman were the identified tribes live in 158 habitants of Pondicherry region. They reside in 63 villages in Bahour, Mannadipet, Nettapakkam, Villianur communes and Oulgarpet Municipality. With teams recommendation initially they were included in MBC category and later in 2010 these tribes were included in Backward Tribes in Gazette of Pondicherry and thereafter 1% reservation was made by Pondicherry Government for them in Group C and D posts and schemes operated under its government (La Gazette De L' Etat, 2010).

8. Funds are plenty to implement the schemes and very few are there to utilize it. Due to the underutilization of funds; budget allocation to the Ministry getting reduced.
9. Out of 30 states, only 15 states regularly make use of the schemes every year. An award can be instituted for the state which performs best in implementation of the tribal welfare schemes. This would encourage all the states to make use of the schemes.
10. Amount sanctioned under Pre-matric scholarship is meager (Rs.150/p.m) which may not attract many to apply. Because money and time spent in the process of applying for the scheme itself costs more than Rs.150/-.
11. Present day scenario, a students need minimum Rs.3000 for mess fess and Rs.3000 for boarding and lodging in degree and post-graduate courses. Scholarship under the scheme of top class education might be revised to Rs.6000/-p.m from Rs.2200/-p.m. It needs periodical revision once in 6 months; while making revision of the schemes one need to consider the prevailing inflation rates.
12. Scheme of Up gradation of Merit for students also needs revision from Rs.700 p.m to Rs.1500 p.m. Last revision was made in 2009.
13. Scheme of strengthening education among tribal girls need to be extended to others areas which has less than 25% of tribal concentration or alternative schemes need to brought out.
14. Scheme for coaching tribes in competitive examination also needs revision. Last revision was made 14 years before (1998-1999).

Conclusion:

Schools, School Social Worker and Schools of School Work working in nearby tribal areas can be bridge between needy and resources. They can play major role in implementation of tribal welfare schemes in Schools and colleges by involving NSS volunteers, youths in creating awareness about the schemes and conducting workshops, training to VAOs and other stakeholders regarding the schemes. In present day scenario, tribal welfare schemes are mirage to the tribals. School Social Workers can turn the mirage into miracle by the virtue of their training in Social Work methods.

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