

## **Are Dalits Getting the Resources Due to Them?**

By the Centre for Budgets & Governance Accountability (CBGA)

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According to Census 2001, the Scheduled Castes constitute 16.2% of the total population of India. However, this social group has historically suffered from caste and untouchability based exclusion and discrimination. In spite of decades of planning and a sizeable amount of public resources being channeled in the name of welfare of SCs, actual benefits have hardly reached these groups. In relation to all major socio-economic indicators (such as, access to income generating assets, poverty, employment, education, health etc.) they have been far below the national average.

Recognizing this fact, the Government of India under the directive of the then Prime Minister, Ms. Indira Gandhi, formulated the Special Component Plan (SCP) (now being renamed as - Scheduled Caste Sub Plan or SCSP) during the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, in the year 1979. The SCP for SCs expected “to facilitate easy convergence and pooling of resources from all the other development sectors in proportion to the population of SCs and monitoring of various development programmes for the benefit of SCs”. This strategy was made mandatory for all the State governments’ departments as well as Central Government ministries.

The SCSP is not meant to be an isolated programme / scheme. Instead it’s purpose was to serve as an umbrella strategy for overall development of Scheduled Castes. The strategy entails the targeted flow of funds and associated benefits from the Annual Plan of States/ Union Territories, at least in proportion to the Scheduled Caste population in total population of the States/ Union Territories.

While the central objective of the SCP is the economic development of Scheduled Castes, it also intends to promote their educational and social development along with the fulfillment of their minimum needs and human resources development. The objective of SCP is to ensure that not only are sufficient funds allocated for the welfare of Dalits, but also that the funds are properly used and that effective and practical programmes with clear goals and targets are initiated.

### **Key Components of the SCP<sup>13</sup>**

The main elements of SCP are the following:

1. Out of the total plan outlay, funds allocated for the welfare of Dalits should be at least as much as the percentage of their population representation in the particular state.
2. Every department of the state government should initiate concrete steps to evolve separate programmes, in accordance with specific needs and priorities of Dalits, under the SCP. Notional allocations under SCP (especially in sectors like Power, Irrigation, Education, and Health) need to be avoided.

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<sup>13</sup> This part of the paper has been drawn from **Social Watch - Tamil Nadu** (2004), “Special Component Plan: Dalit Hopes Betrayed?” *Second (Revised) Edition*, Chennai, July 2004.

3. Only those programmes specially meant for Dalits and the percentage amount of funds allocated, as per specific Government Orders, can be included in the SCP.
4. Separate budget heads have to be shown in the “Plan-Budget Link” Book clearly mentioning the receipts and expenditures details of the SCP (in order to prevent diversion, underutilization and mis-utilization of funds earmarked for Dalits).
5. The Department concerned with Dalit Welfare in the State should act as the Nodal Agency for the formulation and implementation of SCP in the state.

The three important instruments devised as vehicles for the implementation of the SCP strategy are:

1. The SCP of the states and central ministries: the targets fixed under SCP are disaggregated into district-wise and sector-wise targets. At the district level, the district collectors are responsible for coordinating the implementation of the schemes under SCP.
2. The Special Central Assistance (SCA) for the SCPs of the States: SCA is given as 100% grant by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to various States, to make up for any deficiency towards the implementation of the SCP in the respective State.
3. Scheduled castes Development Corporations (SCDCs) in the States or the State Departments, which will play the role of Nodal Agencies, in the implementation of SCP in the States.

#### **Nature of Allocations**

The allocations for SCs fall under two categories:

1. Actual Allocations: This refers to allocations for SCs under those schemes, which are either meant exclusively for SCs or those in which there are clear guidelines/instructions regarding the proportion of SC beneficiaries being a certain minimum level within the total beneficiaries of the scheme.
2. Notional Allocations: In contrast to Actual Allocations for SCs, Notional Allocations for SCs refer to allocations that are shown by the Government Ministry/ Department as directly benefiting the SCs from within the total allocations for a Scheme. These benefits, even if they really reach the SCs in the proportions shown by the Ministry/Department, are at best incidental benefits derived by SCs, for which there were no binding policy guidelines or instructions within the scheme.

#### **Implementation of SCP: Disturbing Evidences**

Although the evolution of the SCP dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, evidences from the States (such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh), where civil society groups have been tracking the implementation of SCP in the State Budgets present a disturbing picture. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been regularly pressurizing the States to ensure adequate allocations under SCSP. As an incentive, 25% of the Special Central Assistance is released to States/ UTs on the basis of percentage allocation made by them under SCSP as compared to share of SC's in their total population.

According to the report of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the performance of States such as Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh in earmarking allocations under the

SCSP has been good. However, other States/ UTs do not provide a satisfactory picture on the earmarking of allocations under SCSP for the development of SCs.

Moreover, the details of the total State plan Outlay, flow to SCSP as reported by States/ UTs for the first three years of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan shows that the percentage of allocation under SCSP in the first three years of the 10th Plan has not been corresponding with the 16.23% share of the SC in the total population.

Table 1 - Total State Plan Outlay, Flow to SCSP as Reported by States/ UTs

| Year      | Total State Plan Outlay (Rs. in Crore) | SCSP Outlay | % of SCSP Outlay to State Plan Outlay |
|-----------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2002-2003 | 88591.83                               | 10177.54    | 11.49                                 |
| 2003-2004 | 85757.97                               | 10373.95    | 12.10                                 |
| 2004-2005 | 95518.76                               | 12057.43    | 12.62                                 |

Background Note: Working Group for the formulation of Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

### Schemes for Welfare and development of Scheduled Castes

Table 2 - Schemes exclusively meant for welfare of SCs

| Department / Ministry                    | Scheme  | Plan Allocation for the Scheme in 2006-07 (Rs. Crore) | Plan Allocation Earmarked for SCs (Rs. Crore) |
|--|---|---|---|
| Department. of Science & Technology      | Special Component Plan for the Development of SCs   | 2.5   | 2.5   |
| Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment | Special Central Assistance for Scheduled Castes Component Plan  | 440.12  | 440.12  |
|  | Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme  | 440   | 440   |
|  | Machinery for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 | 36.91   | 36.91   |
|  | Girls Hostels   | 32  | 32  |
|  | Boys Hostels  | 28  | 28  |
|  | Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs   | 16  | 16  |
|  | Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Welfare of Scheduled Castes                                       | 30  | 30  |
|  | Other Programmes for Welfare of Scheduled Castes  | 47.85   | 47.85   |
|  | Common Programmes for Scheduled Castes  | 5.8   | 5.8   |
|  | National SC Finance and Development Corporation   | 37  | 37  |
|  | State Scheduled Caste Development Corporations  | 33  | 33  |
|  | National Safai Karmachari Finance and Development Corporation   | 80  | 80  |
|  |   | <b>1226.68</b>  | <b>1226.68</b>                                |

Source: Statement 21, Expenditure Budget Vol. I, Union Budget 2006-07

## Plan Allocations Earmarked for SCs by Central Government Ministries in 2006-07

Table 3 clearly shows that the allocations have been extremely low with regard to allocations by other Ministries/Departments. Only some of the beneficiary-oriented Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Rural Development, and Department of Science and Technology) have shown Plan allocations clearly earmarked for SCs.

Table 3 - Status of Implementation of SCP for SCs by Central Government Departments / Ministries (having Actual or Notional Plan Allocations for SCs) in 2006-07

| Department/ Ministry  | Total Plan Allocation for the Dept./ Ministry in 2006-07 (Rs. Crore) | Plan Allocation Earmarked for SCs (Rs. Crore) | Proportion of Total Plan Allocation of the Dept. Earmarked for SCs (in %) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Dept. of Science & Technology                                     | 1340   | 2.5   | 0.17  |
| Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment                          | 1750   | 1226.68                                       | 70.1  |
| Department of Rural Development                                   | 24025.62   | 2286  | 9.51  |
| Ministry of Labour & Employment                                   | 311.36   | 0.53  | 0.17  |
| Dept. of Women & Child Development                                | 4795.85  | 635   | 13.2  |
| Dept. of Secondary Education & Higher Education (Ministry of HRD) | 3616   | 371.2   | 5.9   |
| Dept. of Elementary Education & Literacy (Ministry of HRD)        | 17128  | 2493.5  | 14.6  |
| Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports                              | 600  | 16.45   | 2.74  |

However, in case of all of the above mentioned Ministries except for Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the proportion of Plan allocations for SCs is less than 16 %. Moreover, in case of some of these Ministries, the allocations are only notional allocations, where incidental benefits to SCs from the regular schemes of the Ministry have been assumed without any concrete data on actual beneficiaries.

We find that almost all of the schemes, under which there are clearly earmarked allocations for SCs, following the conventional approach of placation instead of actual empowerment of SCs. The mainstream Ministries, which are benefiting most from the current trajectory of economic growth in the country, have not been showing any allocations clearly earmarked for SCs. One of the main arguments put forward in this respect is that their schemes/ services are indivisible. And, therefore, it is not feasible for such mainstream Ministries to implement SCP for SCs.

The most disappointing fact is that in most of the crucial sectors, which are very important from the point of view of economic empowerment such as Department of Agricultural Research and Cooperation, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department of Road Transport and Highways, there are absolutely no concrete schemes for inclusion of SCs. They don't even have notional allocations for SCs, set aside the actual allocations.

Table 4 - Status of Implementation of SCP for SC's by the Central Govt. in 2006-07

| <b>Total Plan Allocations by All Departments/Ministries of the Central Govt. in 2006-07</b> | <b>Plan Allocations Earmarked for SCs by all Departments/ Ministries in 2006-07</b> | <b>Proportion of Total Plan Allocation of the Central Govt. Earmarked for SCs in 2006-07</b> |
|---|---|--|
| Rs. 1,65,499 crore  | Rs. 7,031.86 crore  | 4.25 %   |

In totality, we find that only four Ministries/Departments in the Central Government (including the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) have some small amounts of Plan allocations earmarked for SCs, while three other Departments have some amount of notional Plan allocations earmarked for SCs. The proportions of these Plan allocations earmarked for SCs are far below the proportion of SC population in total population of the country, i.e. roughly 16 %, which is in violation of the strategy of SCP for SCs. Thus, there should not be any doubts as to why the SCs have been excluded from the growth process. We must recognize that empowerment of SCs requires that they get their due share in economic growth and wealth creation.

The approach towards development of SCs needs to be an Entitlement-based and Rights-based approach rather than that of charity or placation. In this regard, a comprehensive review of the existing approach, strategies, priorities of the ongoing policies and programmes and their implementation for the development and empowerment of SCs is required on an urgent basis.