

DABA

Dalit Adivasi Budget Analysis 2026-27



Introduction:

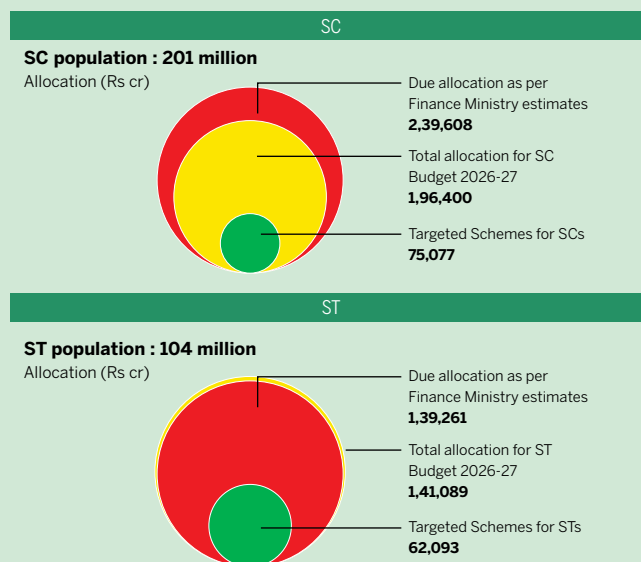
The union budget 2026-27 positions India for transformative growth under the theme of Viksit Bharat. Set against a backdrop of global uncertainties, domestic fiscal limitations, and long-term development goals, the budget plays a vital role in striking a balance between fiscal discipline and inclusive growth. The 2026 Budget in India is crucial for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), focusing on the needs of historically marginalized communities. It involves targeted schemes and specific funding mechanisms, including allocated sub-plans that mandate ministries to earmark funds for the welfare and empowerment of SC and ST populations, reinforcing India's commitment to affirmative policies aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination.

Despite intentions to improve conditions for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), significant structural challenges hinder the effective use of budgetary allocations. Many funds remain unspent or categorized as "notional" by implementing bodies, failing to translate into real-world disbursements. This situation diminishes the efficacy of earmarked funds and weakens accountability¹. Additionally, complex administrative procedures and minimal community involvement in planning lead to delays in fund utilization, resulting in inefficient schemes that fail to meet local needs. Furthermore, data limitations and a lack of strong monitoring systems² impair impact assessments and hinder adaptive planning.

Last FY 2025-26 the welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC) under the Developmental Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC) received about ₹1.68 lakh crore (expected to receive Rs. 2.30 lakh crore) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) under the Developmental Action Plan for Scheduled Tribe (DAPST) received Rs. 1.29 lakh crore (expected to receive Rs. 1.32 lakh crore) indicating serious implementation gaps. These financial provisions are crucial, as SC and Scheduled Tribe

Figure 1: Budget For Scheduled Castes & For Scheduled Tribes -FY 2026-27 (in Rs. Cr.)

	SC	ST
(a) Total Expenditure Budget Estimate FY 2026-27(Note-1)	53,47,314.81	53,47,314.81
(b) Total Eligible Central Sector Schemes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (Note 2)	1,667,947	1,668,261
(c) Due Allocation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Schemes as per the New Guidelines of NITI Aayog (Note 1)	239,608	139,261
(d) Allocation for SC Schemes (as per Statement 10A) and ST Schemes (as per Statement 10B)	196,400	141,089
(e) % of Allocation (e) = (d)% of (b)	11.8%	8.5%
(f) Targeted Schemes	75,077	62,093
(g) % of Targeted Allocation (g)=(f)% of (b)	4.5%	3.7%
(i) Total Gap in allocation (Due Allocation- Targeted Schemes) (i)=(c)-(f)	164,530	77,168



Source: Gov of India -Budget Expenditure Profile 2026-27 Ministry of Finance.

*Note-1: Total Expenditure through budget, as per statement-1,Expenditure Profile, FY 2026-27

*Note-2: Current system of Budgeting for SC & ST is DAPSC & DAPST as per the new guidelines issued by NITI Aayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal,MSJE, Gol. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.

*Note-1: In the new guidelines SCSP and TSP are renamed as DAPSC (Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes) & DAPST (Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes)

*Note-2: New System of Budgeting for SC & ST is DAPSC & DAPST as per the new guidelines issued by NITI Aayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal,MSJE, Gol. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS (Central Schemes + Central Sponsored Schemes) to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.

¹ <https://www.cbgaIndia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Study-Report-SCP-and-TSP-04.01.12.pdf>

² https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-12/NITI_Aayog_Guideliens_for_SCSP_TSP_2017.pdf



. Highlights of the Budget 2026-27

1. SCs are allocated a total of Rs 196400.37 Crs, while STs are allocated Rs 141088.6 Crs. However, roughly only about Rs 75077.4 Crs and Rs 62092.85 Crs directly reach the SC and ST communities respectively, representing just about 4.5% and 3.7% of the total that is targeted and reaches the community. The remainder is dedicated to non-SC and ST development programs.
2. Post Matric scholarship has an allocation of Rs. 6360 Crs for SCs, which is an increase from Rs 5900 Crs last year, while for STs, there is a significant increase in the allocation from Rs. 2462.68 Crs to Rs. 3176.48 Crs. About Rs 1908 Crs is allocated for Dalit women for post matric scholarship.
3. There are almost no plans in place to phase out manual scavenging. The NAMASTE initiative, which is primarily for the mechanisation of sanitation operations has a budget of only Rs. 110 crore. There is no allocation for the National Safai Karamchari Finance Development Corporation, hence it is basically non-existent.
4. The 2023 NCRB Data shows increasing crimes against SCs and STs however only a total of Rs 550 Crs is allocated for the implementation of both the PCR and PoA Act.
5. Out of the total of Rs 550 Crs, about Rs 550 Crs is allocated specifically to address violence against women
6. The budget for the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) has increased significantly, from Rs 11911 Crs to Rs 13644 Crs, which is a great development given that this is a targeted plan. The components of this system are income creation and skill development programs for SC communities.
7. Jal Jeevan Mission has nearly doubled the budget since last year from Rs 8800 Crs to Rs 14887.40 Crs, yet this initiative is not a targeted scheme and does not explain how it will affect SCs and STs.
8. There is one single scheme for the Economic Development of Economic Empowerment of DNT/NT/SNTs that has an allocation for Rs 30.30 Crs, there are no other specific provisions for the PVTGs who require additional development among the marginalised communities.
9. "The FM did announce that there will be one girls hostel in every district", which was open to both SC and ST girls, has been discontinued; this is a very disturbing precedent because young girls require a safe and secure atmosphere in which to learn.
10. Eklavya Model residential schools continues with an allocation of Rs 7200 Crs out of which about Rs 2160 Crs is specifically earmarked for young women. This is a very good scheme for accessing education for the youth of the Tribal community

(ST) populations experience lower literacy rates, economic marginalization, and restricted access to quality healthcare and infrastructure when compared to national averages.

Ahead of the Union Budget 2026, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman predicts real GDP growth of 6.8-7.2%. The Budget session commenced on January 28, 2026, with the speech on February 1, 2026³. Instead of presenting marginalised community goals as separate welfare demands, the most effective strategy for Budget 2026 is to incorporate them into the frameworks for growth, productivity, and employment. This strategy addresses systemic injustices while remaining consistent with the prevailing political and fiscal narrative.

The Dalit Adivasi Budget analysis examines budget allocations for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) through four layers. It evaluates whether these allocations follow NITI Aayog's guidelines, assesses the quality of allocations from 41 Ministries regarding their developmental impact, analyses the relevance of schemes for community welfare versus mere nominal allocations, and checks the adequacy of these schemes for the SC and ST populations. The analysis concludes with recommendations across various sectors, including Education, Land and Agriculture, Health, Labour and Employment amongst others, emphasizing the adequacy and relevance of schemes, allocations, and monitoring mechanisms. These suggestions involve 41 Ministries and Departments aimed at enhancing planning for the welfare of SC & ST populations.

In FY2026-27, the budget earmarked for Scheduled Caste (SC) communities reached Rs 196,400.37 Cr, representing 11.8% of the total CS+CSS schemes and a 16.6% increase from the previous year. Similarly, the Scheduled Tribe (ST) budget rose by 9.2% to a total of Rs 141,089 Cr, accounting for 8.5% of the same financial period. Despite these nominal increases, the analysis suggests that this funding lacks a direct correlation to community development because it is not accompanied by new schemes or policies. A staggering percentage of these funds remains allocated toward general or non-targeted schemes rather than specific development goals for these communities. The deeper scheme analysis reveals significant structural challenges, as only 33 out of 259 schemes in the SC budget and 47 out of 294 schemes in the ST budget are actually targeted. This results in massive funding gaps, totaling Rs 164,530.44 Cr for SCs and Rs 77,168.32 Cr for STs for the current fiscal year.

Furthermore, critical programs such as the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, the National Child Labour Project, and various higher education scholarships (SHREYAS) remain severely underfunded. This underfunding of highly effective, targeted initiatives like PMAY-Urban 2.0 and free coaching schemes remains a major concern for the progress of these communities

Allocation Versus Utilisation: Budget Credibility

The Budget Credibility measures deviations between Approved Budgets (BE) and Actual Expenditures (AE), where significant variances, that exceeds 10% implies persistent challenges in fiscal discipline. To enhance this fiscal discipline in India, the government has key frameworks like the Treasury Single Account (TSA), Single Nodal Agency (SNA), and Central Nodal Agency (CNA), alongside integration with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS). By late 2025, SNA SPARSH⁴ was linked to PFMS (Public Finance Management System), State IFMIS (Integrated Financial Management Information System), and RBI's e-Kuber, shifting to a "Just-in-Time" (JIT) "Pull" mechanism that boosts credibility for schemes. These reforms enable real-time monitoring through PFMS, mandate vendor and beneficiary registration to curb diversions, enforce zero-balance accounts to eliminate idle floats, and complement independent CAG audits and fiscal reporting, ensuring funds reach intended beneficiaries. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 serves as India's cornerstone for budget credibility, legally binding the central government to fiscal discipline targets and macroeconomic stability. It mandates three key parliamentary statements such as the Macroeconomic Framework Statement, Medium-term Fiscal Policy Statement, and Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement, that are projecting indicators such as revenue deficit, fiscal deficit, tax revenue, and total liabilities as percentages of GDP. Moreover, integrating with these modern tools like (TSA), and PFMS, including the SNA SPARSH linkage to State IFMIS and RBI's e-Kuber for JIT "Pull" mechanisms expanding to 32 core CSS (Centrally Sponsored Schemes) schemes by late 2025 across 23 States, from its pilot. However, some of the important schemes that has been included in these 32 schemes across 23 states are " PM-AJAY (Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana), PM YASASVI, Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) under

³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/budget-economic-survey-2026-india-live-updates-nirmala-sitharaman-anantha-nageswaran-parliament-budget-session-income-tax-expectations-railway-salaried-employees-latest-news/liveblog/127751433.cms>

⁴ Circular: https://doe.gov.in/files/circulars_document/OM_dated_13_07_2023_just_in_time_release_of_CSS_funds_through_e_kuber_platform_of_RBI.pdf

Budget Speech 2024-25. Buoyed by the success of the pilot project, our government, in partnership with the states, will facilitate the implementation of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture for coverage of farmers and their lands in 3 years. A new 'factor of production' in the 21st century, is instrumental in formalization of the economy.

2025 Economic Reforms, Building a Future-Ready India. (Posted On: 30 DEC 2025 1:11PM) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?id=156784&Noteld=156784&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=1>

Figure 2a: Scheduled Castes Budget : Due, Allocated, Targeted in FY 2026-27

Financial Year	FY 2026-27 (BE)
Total CS+CSS (Rs.Cr.)	1,667,947
Due Allocations (Rs.Cr.) (*)	239,608
% Due Share (1.) As per NITI Ayog guideline	14.37%
Allocation earmarked for SCs (Rs.Cr.)	196,400
% Allocation to SCs to Total CS+CSS	11.8%
Total Targeted Schemes - SCs (Rs.Cr.)	75,077
% Targeted Scheme to SCs to Total CS+CSS	4.5%

“FY 2026-27: The Due amount has been calculated by the new guidelines issued by NITI Ayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal, MSJE, Gol. This Guideline gives Ministry wise allocation for SCs and has named it as DAPSC (Development Action Plan For Schedule Caste) vide. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.
1. As per the NITI Ayog guideline on DAPSC & DAPST the total Due allocation comes 14.37% in stead of 16.6% which is prescribed by earstwhile Narendra Jadav Committee.”
Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2026-27

Figure 2b: Scheduled Tribes Budget: Due, Allocated, Targeted in FY 2026-27

Financial Year	FY 2026-27 (BE)
Total CS+CSS (Rs.Cr.)	1,668,261
Due Allocations (Rs.Cr.)(*)	139,261
% Due Share (1.) As per NITI Ayog guideline	8.3%
Allocation earmarked for STs (Rs.Cr.)	1,41,089
% Allocation to STs to Total CS+CSS	8.5%
Total Targeted Schemes - STs (Rs.Cr.)	62,093
% Targeted Scheme to STs to Total CS+CSS	3.7%

“FY 2026-27: The Due amount has been calculated according to the new guidelines issued by NITI Ayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal, MSJE, Gol. This guideline gives ministry-wise allocation for STs and has named it DAPST (Development Action Plan For Schedule Tribes) vide. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.
1. As per the NITI Ayog guideline on DAPSC & DAPST the total Due allocation comes 8.16% instead of 8.6% which is prescribed by earstwhile SCP & TSP Policy.”
Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2026-27

Figure 2c: Scheduled Caste Budget : Due, Allocated, Targeted-5 yrs Trends

Financial Year	Total CS+CSS (Rs.Cr.)	Due Allocations (Rs.Cr.) (*)	% Due Share (1.) As per NITI Ayog guideline	Allocation earmarked for SCs (Rs.Cr.)	% Allocation to SCs to Total CS+CSS	Total Targeted Schemes - SCs (Rs.Cr.)	% Targeted Scheme to SCs to Total CS+CSS
2022-23 (BE)	1,230,836	182,976	14.91%	142,342	11.6%	53,795	4.4%
2023-24 (BE)	1,419,910	203,991	14.37%	159,126	11.2%	30,475	2.1%
2024-25 (BE)	1,464,479	214,109	14.60%	165,493	11.3%	46,192	3.2%
2025-26 (BE)	1,575,988	230,132	14.60%	168,478	10.7%	62,150	3.9%
2026-27 (BE)	1,667,947	239,608	14.37%	196,400	11.8%	75,077	4.5%
Total	7,359,160	1,070,816	14.55%	831,840	11.30%	267,689	3.6%

“FY 2026-27: The Due amount has been calculated by the new guidelines issued by NITI Ayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal, MSJE, Gol. This Guideline gives Ministry wise allocation for SCs and has named it as DAPSC (Development Action Plan For Schedule Caste) vide. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.
1. As per the NITI Ayog guideline on DAPSC & DAPST the total Due allocation comes 14.37% in stead of 16.6% which is prescribed by earstwhile SCP & TSP Policy.”
Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2022-23 to FY2026-27

Figure 2d: Scheduled Tribes Budget: Due, Allocated, Targeted in last 5 yrs Trends

Financial Year	Total CS+CSS (Rs.Cr.)	Due Allocations (Rs.Cr.) (*)	% Due Share (1.) As per NITI Ayog guideline	Allocation earmarked for STs (Rs.Cr.)	% Allocation to STs to Total CS+CSS	Total Targeted Schemes - STs (Rs.Cr.)	% Targeted Scheme to STs to Total CS+CSS
2022-23 (BE)	1,226,282	98,664	8.17%	89,265	7.3%	43,586	3.6%
2023-24 (BE)	1,418,244	115,672	8.16%	119,510	8.4%	24,384	1.7%
2024-25 (BE)	1,463,079	122,400	8.37%	124,909	8.5%	41,730	2.9%
2025-26 (BE)	1,575,920	132,501	8.41%	129,250	8.2%	51,492	3.3%
2026-27 (BE)	1,668,261	139,261	8.35%	141,089	8.5%	62,093	3.7%
Total	7,351,785	608,498	8.28%	604,022	8.22%	223,284	3.0%

“FY 2026-27: The Due amount has been calculated by the new guidelines issued by NITI Ayog on Dated 1 April 2018 available in eUthan Portal, MSJE, Gol. This Guideline gives Ministry wise allocation for SCs and has named it as DAPST (Development Action Plan For Schedule Tribes) vide. As per the Guidelines each obligatory Ministry/Department is given a set proportion of the CS+CSS to be earmarked as the Budget for SC and ST schemes.
1. As per the NITI Ayog guideline on DAPSC & DAPST the total Due allocation comes 8.2% in stead of 8.6% which is prescribed by earstwhile SCP & TSP Policy.”
Source: Union Budget Expenditure Profile FY2022-23 to FY2026-27

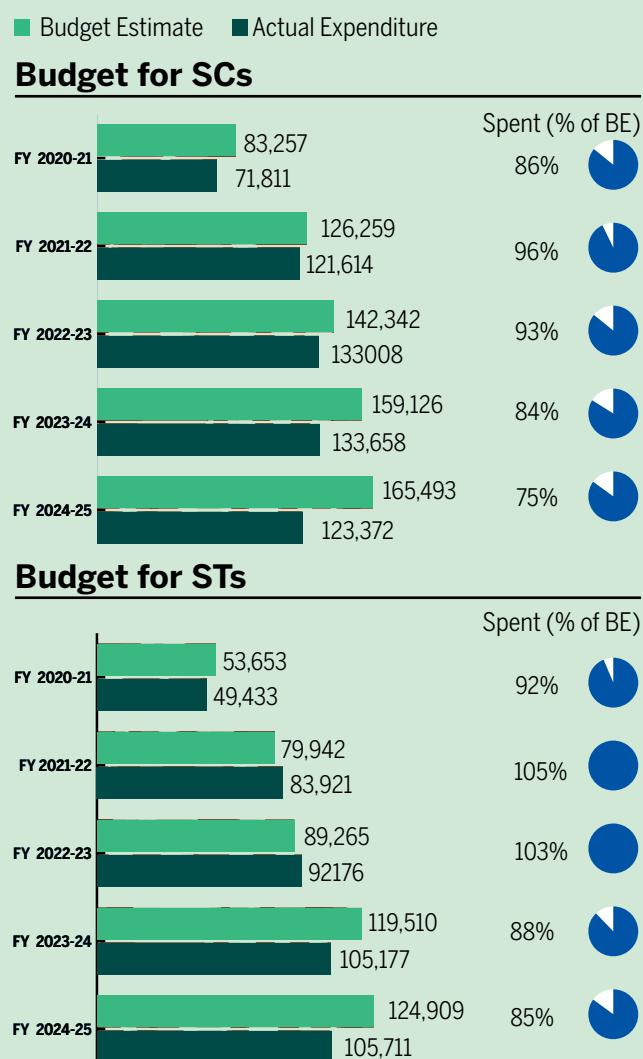
MSJE, GoI, PM Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojna (Development of STs) schemes under MoTA, other important schemes like PMAY-Urban 2.0, MGNREGA (Admin & Program), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and so on, with plans to onboard all Centrally Sponsored Schemes by year-end. SNA SPARSH enhances budget credibility by delivering utilization tracking that verifies 90%+ rates through real-time data on Actual vs budgeted expenditures, integrates Central and State shares at payment, simplifying bifurcation and audits. Its core goal ensures funds from India's Consolidated Fund (CFI) and State Consolidated Funds (CFS) release only on triggered expenditures, eliminating "float" in agency accounts. Real-time transfers through RBI credit both shares simultaneously to vendors and beneficiaries, with State pre-funding just before payments for seamless flow.

Budget credibility under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC) and Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) reveals persistent underutilization concerns, falling below the optimal 90% threshold across multiple fiscal years. In the SC Budget, fund utilization declined to 80% in FY 2019-20 (utilised Rs 65,197 Cr of Rs 81,341 Cr Approved budget), increased marginally to 86% in FY 2020-21 (utilised Rs 71,811 Cr of Rs 83,257 Cr), but remained stalled at 84% in FY 2023-24 (utilised Rs 1,33,658 Cr of Rs 1,59,126 Cr) indicating persistent underutilisation. Similarly, the ST Budget accounted 89% utilization in FY 2019-20 (utilised Rs 46,911 Cr of Rs 52,885 Cr) and 88% in FY 2023-24 (utilised Rs 1,05,177 Cr of Rs 1,19,510 Cr), both below optimal levels. This chronic underutilization signals systemic implementation gaps both in DAPSC & ST Budget. These deviations reflect major challenges in fiscal discipline and execution capacity, undermining budget credibility and delaying critical welfare delivery to SC/ST communities. An appeal for a stronger real-time monitoring portal like eUtthan exclusively updating regularly, enhanced inter-ministerial coordination, and accountability mechanisms to bridge the severe issues of budget credibility.

Livelihood

The year 2025 witnessed some surprising move by the government in terms of Livelihood schemes gaining both positive and negative critical opinions. This year the government introduced new bill of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025, (VB-G RAM G Act 2025) which will be under the Ministry of Ministry of Rural Development. This new bill promises an increase in the guaranteed employment to 125 days per household(rural) which was 100 days previously.

Figure 3: Utilisation of funds for Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe Schemes in Union Budget FY2020-21 to FY2024-25 (Rs.Cr)



Source: Gov of India - Budget Expenditure Profile of 2020-21 to 2026-27 Ministry of Finance

VB- RAM- G shall be funded by both Central and state governments whereas MGNREGA was a fully Centrally sponsored Scheme (CSS). This shall add more burden to the state government and some of the state government has already shared some constraining remarks. The allocation under VB-G RAM G for the financial year 2026-27 is Rs 95692.31 cr. as Central's share which is to be complemented by the State's share. for this scheme, Rs.10301.17cr. from AWSC and Rs.9013.53cr. has been allocated from AWST. In the previous FY of 2025-26, allocation for MGNREGA was Rs.86,000Cr. with significant contribution from AWSC and AWST. Four major ministries such as the Ministry of Rural Development, Skill Development, Urban affairs head the prominent livelihood schemes in the country. The total allocation for FY 2026-27 under another major livelihood

scheme Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- NRLM is Rs.4800cr. from AWSC and Rs. 3360cr. from AWST, with minimal increase in allocation from the last FY. Another important scheme Pradhan Mantri Anushuchit Jati Abhyuday Yojana (PM- AJAY) has been allocated with a total of Rs.2140Cr. which was Rs.2040cr. in the last financial year which shows there is a slight increase in allocation of Rs.100cr from the previous FY. Similarly, under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (AWST) has been allocated Rs.2013.46cr. for this FY 2026-27, without any clear and specific earmarking for the livelihood opportunities. which creates a challenge to identify the exact allocation for the livelihood development of the Tribals.

An Urban Livelihood scheme PM- SVANidhi which was declared to target and push for the financial liberation, empowerment and inclusion with urban growth and development. Surprisingly from the last financial year, no allocation has been given under AWSC for this scheme posing a serious question of exclusion of Dalit from the scheme. Skill India schemes have been allocated Rs.464.8cr. for AWSC and Rs.275.87cr. for AWST for this FY, which means there was reduction in allocation under AWSC of Rs.79.6cr. and from AWST of Rs.46.67cr. in comparison to the last year's allocation. Namaste Schemes has been allocated with Rs.110Cr. for this FY of 2026-27, which was allocated with Rs.130Cr. in the last FY.

There is a strong demand and need for the dissemination of the information about the government schemes and programmes through various means. India takes pride at its remarkable digital transition feat where almost all the financial transactions and other business are almost fully automated or digitalised. But, at the same time, thousands of marginalized communities of SCs and STs are not part of this glaring transition due to lack of access to these digital spaces, means of access and literacy. Leaving no one behind' still seems to be an exclusive feat for the privileged section of the society. It is to note that in FY 2025-26, (mentioned in the Demand for Grants) Rs.1,2,11cr. was allocated for information and publicity, similarly in this FY, under Demand no.61, Rs.1476.83cr. has been allocated for the same head which clearly shows an increase in allocation. Yet, it is concerning that Information about the Rights and entitlements of Dalit and Adivasis has failed to reach the targeted and most marginalised communities. There are earmarked allocations under most of the ministries for the purpose of information and awareness building actions but it never seems to bridge the gap.

Allocation under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM- KISAN) has been allocated with a total of

Rs.11707.50Cr. (AWSC) and Rs.5657.50Cr. (AWST) for this financial year of 2026-27 which was allocated with the exact same amount as it was in the last FY. A similar case has been observed under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), with no increase in allocation. Under this PMFBY scheme Rs.2048Cr. is allocated for SCs and Rs.970.04 Cr. for the STs in this FY. In the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) with Rs.415.02Cr. is allocated for SC and Rs.255.02Cr. for ST this FY, which shows there is an increase in allocation for this FY.

Fisheries under 'Blue Economy' seems to have a huge scope of growth in the upcoming years under the recently signed FTA with the EU. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is one of the biggest Fishery schemes which was launched in September 2020. Under this scheme Rs.426.00Cr. has been allocated in AWSC, Rs. 227Cr. in AWST for this FY. Blue Revolution is a booming industry and India has set high aspirational goals for the same. The total coastal area of India is 11,098. 81km, and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is about 370 Km which is the active maritime area. It is important to mention here that the SC fisher community is facing discrimination in regard to access to water for fishing. Identity as a fisherfolks and discrimination during the rescue operations in times of natural calamities and it needs serious attention. In this FY, there is only one scheme under the department of fisheries under statement 10A, with no substantial allocation and direct schemes for the SC fishers' communities whereas the vast number of the SC people are engaged in fishing activities both in coastal areas and the inland fishing activities. When the country is enthusiastic about booming fishing business and other marine activities, the sheer neglect of introducing any targeted schemes for the SCs only indicates the further marginalisation of the SC fishing community whose identity as 'Fishers' are already eroding over the course of time.

Interstate migration for better livelihood opportunities is not a new phenomenon for the Dalit and Adivasi population. Incidences of violence on the migrants, especially those migrating for menial and low paying jobs in other cities are rising alarmingly. Therefore, there is a dire need for securing the life and dignity of the marginalized communities in the distant lands who are risking their lives for earning livelihood. There are some good schemes for the migrant workers which definitely need more financial and programmatic push, along with budgetary augmentation and robust systems for implementation and monitoring of the same. National Tribal Migration Support Portal is one of such commendable initiatives of the government of India which targets to safeguard the interest of Migrants

originating from Tribal community. Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) is another important sub-scheme under PMAY-U for the Urban Migrants and Poor. This FY, under the PMAY- Urban, there is an allocation of Rs.3642.51cr. under AWSC and Rs.958.01Cr. under AWST, but no specific targeted allocation for the Affordable Rental Housing complexes under this scheme is given whereas the SCs and STs are the largest interstate migrating labour workforce of the country.

There is a huge demand for economic justice for the care workers, gig workers and those still trampled under the low, under paid unsecured and unorganized sector jobs in terms of workplace safety, minimum guaranteed wage, social security, health insurance and other basic decent work amenities.

Sanitation and Frontline Workers

The majority of sanitation workforce in India comes from SC background and there is no denial of the fact that this is due to the caste-based discrimination which has existed in the country from centuries ago. It is quite interesting and equally disheartening that casteism never seems to stop rather exist more strongly now. Children of the SC community are forced to clean the toilets and school premises in the educational centers, separated from the children of other communities and indirectly discourage them to drop out of school through some deliberate casteist actions.

If one were to look at the schemes and programmes for the sanitation workers in the country, the NAMASTE scheme was introduced in the year 2023 replacing the earlier schemes called Schemes for the Rehabilitation of the Manual Scavengers (SRMS). The introduction of NAMASTE has completely denied and eroded the essence of Human Rights violation and now completely projects sanitation work as a mere issue of mechanisation. The allocation under NAMASTE for this FY of 2026-27 is Rs.110 Cr. which was Rs.130Cr. in the last financial year. It is also to be noted that the landmark judgement dated October 20, 2023, in Dr Balram Singh V. Union of India, Supreme court ordered a nationwide survey for identification of people engaged in Manual Scavenging to be completed by October 20, 2024 but it is yet to be completed, raising a serious question on the power and authority of the Supreme Court along with the shallow intention and denial of justice by the state to deliver justice to the People engaged in Sanitation work especially in manual scavenging.

Hundreds of women engaged in garbage picking, segregation and cart pulling work have reported respiratory

problems, impacts on their reproductive health and organ damages, skin problems among the others. Yet, many are still struggling to access the benefits of the Ayushman Bharat schemes because of the distant location and lack of availability of services in the assigned hospitals. Many were trampled and caught under the vicious debt cycle because of this.

Allocation under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for this FY 2026-27, under SBM – Grameen is Rs.1354.9cr. which was of same amount in the last FY as well, meaning no increase in allocation, also there should be an allocation under AWSC for SBM- Urban for the urban SC population living in the outskirts of cities, slums etc who are continuously facing the challenge for safe drinking water and sanitation. There is no exclusive earmarking for Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY) for the FY 2026-27 as considered as an important component under NAMASTE. This creates a confusion for the public to understand the actual provision under the scheme and claim the benefit of the scheme. The allocation for the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation for this FY is Rs.0.01cr. The same amount was allocated in the last FY as well.

It is interesting to note here that most of the loan schemes are for procuring sanitation – related vehicles/ equipment etc. and somehow majority of these schemes revolve around sanitation work. There is a need to shift perspective and introduce schemes and programmes which are different from the sanitation work and break a deliberate systemic force of pushing them back into the periphery of sanitation work. An immediate action of the nodal agencies such as NSKFDC and DSFDC is needed for considering the pending applications of the people who applied for the composite schemes and other such loan schemes, also there is a demand for careful look and reconsideration of the eligibility criteria of the applicants, terms and conditions to be reworked so that many eligible people who are in actual need of the assistance can apply for the same to take the benefit of the scheme.

Public Health

India's healthcare system suffers from deep inequalities that disproportionately affect marginalized groups, especially SC. Socio-economic and caste-based discrimination restricts access to medical services. Access to affordable healthcare for Scheduled Castes (SC) in India remains a critical issue, exacerbating health inequalities. High costs lead to treatment delays or avoidance of medical care, worsened by poverty and discrimination. Underfunded public health systems struggle to serve these marginalized

communities effectively. High healthcare costs, poverty, and discrimination severely limit SCs access to affordable care in India. Underfunded public health systems further neglect their needs, reinforcing a cycle of poor health and deepening healthcare inequalities. Reducing health inequalities for SCs in India requires a rights-based approach that improves access to essential services. Policies should fund community health programs, ensure culturally appropriate facilities, and train healthcare workers to prevent bias. These measures support Viksit Bharat 2047's vision of a just society where all citizens can access healthcare with dignity⁵. Systemic discrimination in India's healthcare system limits SCs access to quality services, reinforcing caste-based inequalities. Historical injustices and the intersection of gender and caste further marginalize SC women, deepening health disparities⁶. Caste significantly affects health outcomes in India, primarily due to discrimination that restricts access to quality health care. A 2007 survey 'Untouchability in Rural India' revealed that over 20% of SC villages faced denial of access to private health facilities, and health-care workers avoided approximately 40% of the surveyed villages. Caste contributes to poor health outcomes by trapping many individuals in scheduled castes, particularly SCs, in deep poverty and limiting social mobility. Approximately one in three SC live in multidimensional poverty, which restricts their access to essential services, including public hospitals. India's 2018 health initiative, Ayushman Bharat–Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), aimed to provide free care to marginalized groups, but widespread corruption undermines its effectiveness. Informal payments are required even in public hospitals, leaving impoverished SCs—many living on less than three dollars a day—unable to afford treatment. India's health infrastructure is largely urban, with over 75% of facilities located in cities while nearly 90% of SCs live in rural areas. Rural health centres face severe staff shortages—over 80% of key specialist positions remain vacant. Despite urgent needs, government health spending has fallen below 1.3%. A few SC doctors have opened hospitals to counter discrimination, but such efforts are too limited to address the widespread inequality. Lasting improvement requires greater government investment in rural health infrastructure to enhance access for marginalized groups. Well-resourced clinics and government-funded health education can empower rural communities to detect diseases early and advocate for their health needs⁷. This FY 2026-27 the allocation for the Flexible Pool for RCH & Health system strengthening, National

Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission is Rs. 6441.34 Cr under AWSC and Rs. 2539.71 Cr under AWST compared to last year with Rs. 6098.43 Cr under AWSC and Rs. 2512.81 Cr under ST. Under the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Ayushman Bharat–Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) scheme aims to provide universal health care services across the country. This FY Rs. 1414.20 Cr has been allocated under AWSC and Rs. 1014.50 Cr under AWST for AB-PMJAY. Another major challenge in Public Healthcare is the overpricing of the medicine and the lack of generic medicine of the same composition. However, it is disappointing to see that this FY 2026-27 the allocation for affordable medicines like the Jan Aushadhi Scheme has been reduced under AWSC to Rs. 16.65 Cr from Rs. 29.34 Cr in FY 2025-26 and under AWST reduced to Rs. 8.63 Cr from Rs. 15.20 Cr in the previous financial year.

For the Ministry of Ayush Rs. 145.79 Cr is allocated under AWSC with an increase of Rs. 7.44 Cr and Rs. 89.86 Cr under AWST with an increase of Rs. 17.95 Cr as compared to last financial year. Under Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) with support to PM POSHAN the allocation is Rs. 2552.16 Cr under AWSC and Rs. 1375.51 Cr under AWST. It is disappointing to see that this FY no allocation has been made for the tertiary care programme both in AWSC and AWST.

Education Justice

Education is a powerful tool for reducing poverty and combating social injustice. Since primary education provides the highest returns, development efforts should prioritise basic literacy to strengthen human capabilities and improve overall wellbeing⁸. B. R. Ambedkar championed education as the foundation of SC empowerment and social transformation. Through the people's education society (1945), he promoted learning as a path to political participation, equality, and resistance to operation⁹. He particularly advocated for educating SC girls, creating equal opportunities, dismantling caste barriers, and supporting inter-caste marriages. His constitutional work secured fundamental rights for SC women. While many SC women have since advanced socially and professionally, economic challenges persist for some¹⁰.

The Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC/ST students, launched in 2012, was initially intended to help SC/ST parents send their

⁵ <https://africanjournalofbiomedicalresearch.com/index.php/AJBR/article/view/8049>

⁶ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4679651

⁷ <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/caste-out>

⁸ <https://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/server/api/core/bitstreams/193473b8-9340-470a-900f-c14e6c1d4a64/content>

⁹ <https://www.epw.in/journal/1996/16-17/special-articles/equity-education-schooling-dalit-children-india.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2301654.pdf>

Fig-4: Relevance of Schemes for SCs and STs-Targeted(Relevant), Non-Targeted (Obsolete) and General Schemes in Union Budget FY2026-27 (Rs in Cr)

% allocation

41%

42%

17%

Total Relevant
₹126630.71Cr

Total General
₹128118Cr

Total Obsolete
₹53083Cr

Fund allocation

NOTE :- The top 50 Schemes account for 90% of the total Schemes under AWSC & AWST. Schemes highlighted under the color Green are Relevant and are targeted Schemes which ensure direct benefit t, under the color yellow are General which benefit everybody and not necessarily SCs or STs, and under Red are obsolete which has no relevance for the SC/ST communities. Yellow and Red together form the Non-Targeted schemes.



Relevant schemes



General schemes



Obsolete schemes

SI No	Name of Schemes	SC	ST	Total
✓	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)	28900.00	17929.00	46829.00
✗	Road WorksWorks under Roads Wing	0.00	10150	10150.00
✓	Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)	0.00	7200	7200.00
!	Jal Jeevan Mission/National Rural Drinking Water Programme -Programme Component	14887.40	6767	21654.40
✓	Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) PMAY-Programme Component	13644.00	11196.01	24840.01
!	Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)	11707.50	5657.50	17365.00
✓	Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)-VB-G RAM G Scheme Expenditure Profile 2026-2027	10301.17	9013.53	19314.70
✗	Urea Subsidy Payment for Indigenous Urea & Import of Urea	10208.92	5288.96	15497.88
!	Samagra Shiksha (SS)	8478.59	5473.26	13951.85
!	Flexible Pool for RCH & Health System Strengthening, National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission	6441.34	2539.71	8981.05
✓	Post Matric Scholarship for SCs/ STs	6360.00	3176.48	9536.48
!	Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 (Umbrella ICDS-Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls)	5305.65	2231.02	7536.67
✗	Reform LinkedDistribution Scheme	4845.00	2510	7355.00
!	Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) NRLM-Programme Component	4676.77	2498.44	7175.21
✓	Programme for Development of Scheduled Tribes(PM Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojna)Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) Development of Scheduled Tribes(PM Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojna)	0.00	2013.46	2013.46
✓	Grants under proviso to Article 275(1) of the Constitution	0.00	1542	1542.00
✗	Nutrient Based Subsidy Payment for Indigenous P and K Fertilisers	4482.83	2322.00	6804.83
✓	MGNREGA-Programme Component	4161.85	3706.72	7868.57
✗	Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS)	3993.60	1485.60	5479.20
✓	PMAY-Urban & PMAY-Urban 2.0 Other items of States/UTs Component	3640.01	956.01	4596.02
!	Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana	3337.82	1731.55	5069.37
!	Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) PM POSHAN	2552.16	1375.51	3927.67
!	Guarantee Emergency Credit Line (GECL) facility to eligible MSME borrowers	2150.00	1050	3200.00
!	Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM AJAY)	2140.00	0	2140.00
!	Crop Insurance Scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna	2048.00	970.04	3018.04
!	PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana Programme Component	1928.15	1960.15	3888.30
!	Employees Pension Scheme, 1995	1871.00	991	2862.00
✗	Compensation to Service Providers for creation augmentation of telecom infrastructure Compensation to Telecom service provide	1958.80	1014.80	2973.60
✗	Infrastructure Maintenance	1622.70	912.48	2535.18

SI No	Name of Schemes	SC	ST	Total
✖	Support to Indian Institutes of Technology Grants to Indian Institutes of Technology	1523.87	711.15	2235.02
!	Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)	1435.20	626.96	2062.16
!	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna	1421.82	1000.69	2422.51
!	Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)	1414.20	1014.5	2428.70
!	SBM-Grameen Programme Component	1354.90	615.9	1970.80
!	Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Yojna (PM-AASHA)	1314.72	681.12	1995.84
!	PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)	1310.77	736.83	2047.60
!	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	1296.29	750.35	2046.64
!	Krishionnati Yojna	1202.05	1519.44	2721.49
!	Support to Central Universities Grants to Central Universities (CUs)	1170.84	571.66	1742.50
!	Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM SETU)	1019.70	528.1	1547.80
✓	Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)	932.31	491.15	1423.46
!	Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)	904.87	453.13	1358.00
!	Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) North-east Region Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)	0.00	861.56	861.56
✖	Support to National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and IIST Grants to National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and IIST	877.98	520.73	1398.71
!	LPG Connection to Poor Households	763.60	395.6	1159.20
!	Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PMABHIM)	677.92	349.86	1027.78
!	Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) Scheme	640.00	352.00	992.00
!	University Grants Commission (UGC) University Grants Commission (UGC)	630.53	333.81	964.34
✓	Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs and Others/ STs	577.96	339.05	917.01
✓	Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1995 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989	550.00	0	550.00
Total Allocation under 50 top schemes from SC & ST Budget		182663	126516	309179
Total Allocation under SC & ST Budget as per 10A & 10B		196,400	141,089	337,489
% of 50 Scheme vs Total SC/ST Budget		91.61		

children to the 9th or 10th standard to reduce dropout rates, but the government has announced that it will no longer be offered to students in classes 1 to 8, as it will be covered by RTE¹¹.

This FY 2026-27 the allocation for the Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC and others remains the same as the previous FY which is Rs. 577.96 Cr. On the other hand, the Pre Matric Scholarship for ST has been increased from Rs. 313.79 Cr in FY 2025-26 to Rs. 339.05 Cr in FY 2026-27 which is a positive step towards education. The Central Share of scholarships awarded under the Pre- and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes is disbursed directly into the beneficiary's account using the Aadhaar Based Payment System (APBS) as of FY 2022-2023. This FY the PM Research Fellowship has

remained the same as the previous year which is Rs. 108.00 Cr for SC and Rs. 51.42 Cr under ST

According to the AISHE report 2021-22 the enrolment of SC students in higher education is 66,22,923 (15.3% of total), with 47.9% being female, ST enrolment is 27,10,678 (6.3% of total), with 49.7% female. However, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the report indicates that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have lower GERs compared to the overall figures, indicating disparities in access to higher education. GER for SC male is 25.8 and SC female is 26.0. GER for ST male is 21.4 and ST female is 20.9¹².

In this union budget 2026-27 the allocation Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) for the Scheduled Caste has been

¹¹ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/union-government-stops-pre-matric-scholarship-for-sc-st-oc-and-minority-students-of-class-1-to-8-and-explains-why/article66195791.ece>

¹² <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s392049debb566ca5782a3045c3f300a3c/uploads/2025/06/2025060466438560.pdf>

increased from Rs. 5900.00 Cr in 2025-26 to Rs. 6360.00 Cr under AWSC and for Scheduled Tribe it has been increased from Rs. 2462.68 Cr in 2025-26 to Rs. 3176.48 Cr under AWST which is a positive step taken by the government. The scheme Grants to Central Universities has been allocated Rs. 1170.84 Cr under AWSC and Rs. 571.66 Cr under AWST and the University Grants Commission allocating Rs. 630.53Cr under AWSC and Rs. 333.81 Cr under AWST, this allocation is massive as compared to the important scheme like Prime Minister's girls hostel where there is zero allocation for both SCs and STs. SCs, belonging to India's lowest caste, face humiliation, and limited interaction in higher education due to double discrimination¹³ ¹⁴. On 13th January 2026 University Grants Commission (UGC) released regulations on Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions 2026 with the intention of combating caste discrimination in college campuses¹⁵. These regulations mark a major shift in India's Higher education governance by replacing the 2012 framework. This regulation not just aims to tackle caste-based discrimination in India's higher education institutions but also acknowledges the long-standing issues of institutional violence within universities and colleges. However, the decision by the supreme court to keep these regulations in abeyance raises serious concerns for the safety, dignity, and equal access of SC, ST and other marginalised students in higher education. Female SC face sexual harassment and dominance, leading to increased dropout rates and suicides¹⁶. SCs freedom to study in inclusive environments is limited, hindering their capability development¹⁷.

Higher education institutions in India have been found to neglect the socio-cultural context of SCs education¹⁸, leading to insufficient sensitivity and unfair bureaucratic approaches¹⁹ ²⁰. SC face difficulties in education, including bullying and inappropriate comments²¹. This caste-based discrimination has resulted in poor academic output, demoralization, and diminished confidence²². Higher education institutions perpetuate caste norms and injustices, affecting SC people's representation and future life²³. Inequality in education should not be based on SCs participation rate or completion, but on their commitment

to social justice and equity. It also highlights the need for removing major sources of unfreedom that restrict SCs aspirations and voices for participation and resistance²⁴. To address caste inequality in higher education, the government and policymakers should revise their evaluation practices, focus on creating parity in education, and address discriminatory practices ²⁵.

Marginalised students face multiple barriers to accessing and completing higher education in India like tuition and living costs in elite institutions like IITs and IIMs make education unaffordable for many economically weaker students. Even those who gain admission often drop out because they cannot cover fees or related expenses such as accommodation and travel. The enduring impact of the caste system limits social and economic mobility. Authority of the dominant-caste in institutions means that SC/ST/OBC students and faculty remain severely underrepresented. Many students from marginalised backgrounds leave higher education due to a mix of financial hardship, academic pressure, and lack of institutional support. Beyond money, these students often face discrimination, isolation, and a lack of belonging in campuses shaped by privileged social groups. As a result, simply getting admitted is not enough — surviving and thriving in such environments is an additional struggle. A comprehensive reform is needed to make higher education more inclusive for marginalised-students to recognize social and educational disadvantages when assessing merit, not just exam scores. Enforce reservation policies effectively in admissions and faculty recruitment. Offer mentorship, remedial education, mental health counselling, and peer networks for first-generation learners. Expand scholarships and reduce tuition and living costs to prevent economic exclusion. Build environments that celebrate diversity, prevent discrimination, and ensure belonging. Collect and monitor data on dropout rates and discrimination to guide better policymaking²⁶.

The National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) Scheme faces significant challenges in its implementation, including financial hardships for students due to delayed

13 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297765600_Discrimination_on_campuses_of_higher_learning_A_perspective_from_below

14 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0738059320304570>

15 <https://www.livela.in/top-stories/supreme-court-ugc-promotion-of-equity-in-higher-education-institutions-regulations-2026-sc-st-obc-caste-discrimination-equity-committees-520913>

16 <https://ijme-journal.org/index.php/ijme/article/view/1627>

17 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/03057925.2023.2254214?needAccess=true>

18 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-015-9966-7>

19 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2455328X20925592>

20 https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-60261-5_1.

21 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0971521519891478>

22 <https://pulliasarchive.equitygraded.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/An-ethnography-of-caste-and-class-at-an-Indian-university-creating-capital-by-Gaurav-Pathania-and-William-Tierney.pdf>

23 <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053354>

24 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/ful/10.1080/02680939.2014.987828?utm_source=researchgate

25 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/03057925.2023.2254214?needAccess=true>

26 <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/marginalised-by-caste-marginalised-in-education/article69034291.ece>

disbursements, barriers for disabled students, and issues with online processes, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. The allocation of NOS for SCs has decreased from Rs. 130 Cr in FY 2025-26 to Rs. 125 Cr in FY 2026-27. However, it is interesting to observe that the allocation for the STs has increased from Rs. 0.01 Cr in FY 2025-26 to Rs. 20.00 Cr in FY 2026-27 which is a welcoming step. However, it is equally concerning that such impactful schemes receive significantly less funding than non-targeted schemes such as Grants to Central Universities, UGC, PM-USHA, and PMUSP. Interest subsidies and guarantee fund contributions for education loans have been eliminated. This program previously subsidized interest during the moratorium period and waived collateral/guarantee requirements for eligible students (family income up to Rs. 4.5 lakhs) pursuing technical/professional degrees in India. A CAG audit identified several irregularities in the scheme's implementation, such as processing delays and difficulties in transferring scholarship funds to beneficiaries. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, including SC/ST students, is crucial for promoting social mobility and equality.

For higher education funding of SC and ST, the Department of Higher Education has allotted Rs. 6808.55 Cr under AWSC and Rs. 3479.34 Cr under AWST. Even though the Department of Higher Education has increased allocations by 63.24% under AWSC and 63.09 % under AWST. Despite an increase in the budget allocation for SC and ST under the Department of Higher Education, many of these initiatives are not targeted towards the development of SC and ST students.

Relevance of Schemes for SC & ST:

A. Excess Allocation in Non-Targeted Schemes under SC Budget

- Urea Subsidy Payment for Indigenous Urea- Rs 10,208.92 Cr
- Nutrient Based Subsidy Payment for Indigenous P and K Fertilisers-Rs 4483 Cr
- Compensation to Service Providers for creation augmentation of telecom infrastructure Compensation to Telecom service provide-Rs 1958.80 Cr.
- Support to Indian Institutes of Technology Grants to Indian Institutes of Technology-Rs 1523.87 Cr
- Support to Central Universities Grants to Central Universities (CUs)-Rs 1170.84 Cr

B. Excess Allocation in Non-Targeted Schemes under ST Budget

- Road Works under Roads Wing-Rs 10,150 Cr
- Urea Subsidy Payment for Indigenous Urea & Import of Urea-Rs 5288.96 Cr
- Reform Linked Distribution Scheme Reform Linked Distribution Scheme-Rs 2510 Cr
- Nutrient Based Subsidy Payment for Imported P and K Fertilisers & Imported P and K Fertilisers- Rs 2322.00 Cr
- Infrastructure Maintenance- Rs 912 Cr

C. Excess Allocation in General Schemes under SC Budget

- Jal Jeevan Mission/National Rural Drinking Water Programme -Programme Component-Rs 14887.4 Cr
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)-Rs 11707.5 Cr
- Samagra Shiksha (SS)-Rs 8478.59 Cr
- Flexible Pool for RCH & Health System Strengthening, National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission-Rs 6441.34 Cr
- Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana-Rs 3337.82 Cr

D. Excess Allocation in General Schemes under ST Budget

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)-Rs 6767 Cr
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan)-Rs 5657.5 Cr
- Flexible Pool for RCH & Health System Strengthening, National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission- Rs 2539.71 Cr
- Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana-Rs 1731.55 Cr
- Krishionnati Yojna- Rs 1519.44 Cr

E. Negligible Allocation in Targeted Schemes under SC Budget

- National Overseas Scholarship for SCs-Rs 125 Cr
- Top Class Education-Rs 120 Cr
- National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)-Rs 110 Cr
- National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme-Rs 70 Cr
- National Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe Hub Centre-Rs 54.01 Cr

F. Negligible Allocation in Targeted Schemes under ST Budget

- National Overseas Scholarship Scheme- Rs 20 Cr
- National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme-Rs 23 Cr
- National Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe Hub Centre- Rs 30.51 Cr
- Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Tribes-Rs 30 Cr
- PM Research Fellowship- Rs 51.42 Cr

Land Rights and Agriculture:

According to All India Report on Agriculture Census 2015-16, Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers ,Government of India 2020, The total number of people who possess land in India is 14.65 Crore in 2015-16, which has increased by 0.8 Cr (5.86%)from 13.85 Cr in 2010-11 Census. Among these 14.65 Cr people who have possessed land, 68.5% people possess marginal land which is equal to below 1.0 hectares of land and only 0.6% of people possess the large land holding patterns which is above 10 hectares. Out of this, as many as 1.73 Crores landholdings belonged to Scheduled Castes followed by Scheduled Tribes 1.27 Crores in the same 2015-16.

As far as out of a total of 1.73 Crores landholdings belonging to Scheduled Castes in 2015-16, male operational holdings accounted for 86.57% while females 13.43%. Similarly in 2010-11, SC male constitutes 86.57% and SC Female 12.27% (0.23 Cr landholding) and out of the 86.57% of SC total, the SC male landholdings a total of 1.50 Crore, that includes Uttar Pradesh (24.8%) and 10 other states accounting for 87%. while female holdings rose to 13.43% in 2015-16 from 12.27% in 2010-11, indicating a positive shift in female representation despite remaining significantly lower than males. There are some states where the female landholding is more and those are Bihar (14.3%) and Uttar Pradesh (13.6%). The average operating area for SC male holders fell to 0.78 hectares and females steady at 0.68 hectares.

In contrast, Scheduled Tribes who hold 1.27 Crores landholdings reveals that 56.3% of tribal communities possess marginal landholding (under 1 hectare), followed by small (23.5%), semi-medium (14.0%), medium (5.6%), and large (0.8%), where these two smallest categories held 79.8% of holdings. According to the Agriculture Census 2015, out of 1.27 Crores Scheduled Tribes operational holdings in 2015-16, males accounted for 87.3% and females constituted 12.7%. Thus, the percentage of female operational holdings was quite low as compared to male

operational holdings. However, the representation of holdings belonging to females increased from 11.3% in 2010-11 to 12.7% in 2015-16.

However, the major concern is that, the total budget under the Department of Land Resource is only Rs 376.82 Cr in SC Budget in FY 2025-26 BE, that comprises of two schemes Watershed Development Component-Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana with program component having an allocation of Rs 356.90 Cr and Land Records Modernization Programme having an allocation of Rs 19.92 Cr. Similarly, under ST Budget in the same financial year, the total allocation under Department of Land Resource is Rs 227.72 Cr that comprises of two schemes Watershed Development Component-Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana with program component having an allocation of Rs 215.72 Cr and Land Records Modernization Programme having an allocation of Rs 12.00 Cr. However, most of these are “general schemes” that lack a direct, measurable impact on the targeted beneficiaries.

Similarly, Under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the SC budget is Rs 22,173.41 Cr and the ST budget is Rs 11,221.42 Cr. However, most of these are “general schemes” that do not have a direct, measurable impact on the targeted beneficiaries. For instance, the major programs like PM-Kisan, that receives significant funding (Rs 11,707.50 Cr for SC and Rs 5,657.50 Cr for ST), nevertheless the annual report, does not provide the disaggregated data on how many SC beneficiaries out of 9.58 Cr farmers received the benefits during the 18th instalment period. Of course the report covers over 9.33 lakh FRA patta holders/PVTG farmers have been registered in the scheme. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana sees high allocations (Rs 2,048.00 Cr for SC and Rs 970.04 Cr for ST), yet remains part of the broader issue where specific benefits to these communities are difficult to track.

Ministry/Dept Wise Priority to Schemes for SC & ST:

The 2018 NITI Aayog guidelines on Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes (DAPSC) and Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) represent a pivotal framework mandating 41 obligatory Ministries/Departments to earmark funds at prescribed percentages from their Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS), calculated against scheme outlays rather than total Min/ Department budgets, with provisions for flexibility to utilise the unspent money from one scheme to another with the prior approval of Ministry and Financial Advisor to prevent

Department Wise Due and Allocation under DAPSC Budget for FY 2026-27 BE (Rs in Cr)

SI No	Departments	Total Eligible Ministries(CS +CSS)	% of Proposed Allocation	Due Allocation under SC (Rs Cr)	Allocation under SC Budget (Rs Cr)	
1	Department of Rural Development	194,235.01	25.00	48,558.75	34,642.39	
2	Department of Food and Public Distribution	234,831.50	8.30	19,491.01	29,463.61	
3	Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	129,160.82	16.60	21,440.70	22,039.48	
4	Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation	74,862.00	22.00	16,469.64	16,242.30	
5	Department of School Education and Literacy	66,641.02	21.74	14,487.76	15,479.37	
6	Department of Fertilisers	170,896.00	8.30	14,184.37	14,697.15	
7	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	13,475.37	72.50	9,769.64	10,442.56	
8	Department of Health and Family Welfare	63,705.70	16.60	10,575.15	10,409.15	
9	Department of Higher Education	10,142.40	16.60	1,683.64	6,808.55	
10	Ministry of Women and Child Development	27,890.00	20.00	5,578.00	5,578.00	
11	Ministry of Labour and Employment	31,814.69	16.60	5,281.24	5,301.35	
12	Ministry of Power	21,679.48	16.60	3,598.79	4,845.00	
13	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	24,255.68	16.60	4,026.44	4,160.15	
14	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	81,310.11	22.50	18,294.77	3,642.51	
15	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	32,663.36	8.30	2,711.06	2,573.00	
16	Department of Telecommunications	20,610.41	8.30	1,710.66	2,008.60	
17	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	9,540.50	16.60	1,583.72	1,484.50	
18	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	17,768.55	8.30	1,474.79	1,308.79	
19	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	30,057.07	8.30	2,494.74	979.65	
20	Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	5,873.15	16.60	974.94	695.97	
21	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region	6,777.00	8.30	562.49	565.00	
22	Department of Land Resources	2,625.00	16.60	435.75	435.77	
23	Department of Fisheries	2,530.30	16.60	420.03	426.00	
24	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	2,631.35	25.28	665.21	362.54	
25	Ministry of Textiles	4,659.01	16.60	773.40	298.05	
26	Department of Agricultural Research and Education	2,830.12	8.30	234.90	234.99	
27	Ministry of Food Processing Industries	3,815.00	8.30	316.65	221.60	
28	Department of Science and Technology	23,125.01	8.30	1,919.38	210.00	
29	Ministry of Panchayati Raj	1,142.31	16.60	189.62	190.00	
30	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change	1,959.04	8.30	162.60	168.14	
31	Ministry of AYUSH	1,705.60	14.00	238.78	145.79	
32	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	1,117.00	20.25	226.19	135.62	
33	Ministry of Coal	3,546.00	8.30	294.32	64.41	
34	Ministry of Culture	596.39	8.30	49.50	49.50	
35	Ministry of Mines	440.00	8.30	36.52	35.60	
36	Department of Pharmaceuticals	5,885.35	8.30	488.48	34.65	
37	Department of Commerce	4,920.90	8.30	408.43	15.91	
38	Chandigarh	-	0.00	-	3.22	
39	Department of Consumer Affairs	4,322.00	8.30	358.73	1.50	
40	Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation	18,539.97	8.30	1,538.82	-	
41	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	309,691.77	8.30	25,704.42	-	
42	Ministry of Tourism	2,335.00	8.30	193.81	-	
43	Ministry of Cooperation	1,340.01	0.00	-	-	
TOTAL		1,667,946.95		239,607.84	196,400.37	
As per the Norms set by Jadhav commission				16.60%		
As per the NITI Ayog the proposed allocation				14.37%		
BE allocation				11.80%		

*Source: 1. https://e-utthaan.gov.in/public/pdf/data/Guidelines-Earmarking_DAPSC_DAPST.pdf, published by NITI Aayog, 01 Apr 2018

2. Source:Statement-3, FY 2026-27 Expenditure of Ministries and Departments,Govt of India

..

Department Wise Due and Allocation under DAPST Budget for FY 2026-27 BE (Rs in Cr)

SI No	Departments	Total Eligible Ministries (CS +CSS)	% of Proposed Allocation ST	Due Allocation under ST (Rs Cr)	Allocation under ST Budget (Rs Cr)	
1	Department of Rural Development	194,235.01	17.5	33991	29533.02	<div></div>
2	Department of Food and Public Distribution	234,831.50	4.3	10098	18221.60	<div></div>
3	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	13,789.02	100.0	13789	15331.03	<div></div>
4	Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	129,160.82	8.6	11108	11527.73	<div></div>
5	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	309,691.77	4.3	13317	10150.00	<div></div>
6	Department of School Education and Literacy	66,641.02	12.5	8310	9093.57	<div></div>
7	Department of Fertilisers	170,896.00	4.3	7349	7614.19	<div></div>
8	Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation	74,862.00	10.0	7486	7382.90	<div></div>
9	Department of Health and Family Welfare	63,705.70	8.6	5479	5392.69	<div></div>
10	Department of Higher Education	10,142.40	8.6	872	3479.34	<div></div>
11	Ministry of Labour and Employment	31,814.69	8.6	2736	2768.17	<div></div>
12	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	32,663.36	8.6	2809	2665.97	<div></div>
13	Ministry of Power	21,679.48	8.6	1864	2510.00	<div></div>
14	Ministry of Women and Child Development	27,890.00	8.6	2399	2398.54	<div></div>
15	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	24,255.68	8.6	2086	2217.87	<div></div>
16	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region	6,777.00	27.2	1842	1853.00	<div></div>
17	Lakhsdeep	-	0.0	0	1621.12	<div></div>
18	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	17,768.55	6.7	1190	1056.49	<div></div>
19	Department of Telecommunications	20,610.41	4.3	886	1040.60	<div></div>
20	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	81,310.11	4.3	3496	958.01	<div></div>
21	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	9,540.50	8.6	820	803.97	<div></div>
22	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	30,057.07	4.3	1292	507.53	<div></div>
23	Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	5,873.15	8.6	505	407.74	<div></div>
24	Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation	18,539.97	8.6	1594	336.56	<div></div>
25	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	-	0.0	0	276.73	<div></div>
26	Department of Land Resources	2,625.00	10.0	263	267.52	<div></div>
27	Department of Fisheries	2,530.30	8.6	218	227.00	<div></div>
28	Ministry of Textiles	4,659.01	8.6	401	226.17	<div></div>
29	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	2,631.35	8.6	226	189.00	<div></div>
30	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change	1,959.04	8.6	168	174.99	<div></div>
31	Department of Agricultural Research and Education	2,830.12	4.3	122	121.81	<div></div>
32	Ministry of Food Processing Industries	3,815.00	4.3	164	112.45	<div></div>
33	Department of Science and Technology	23,125.01	4.3	994	107.25	<div></div>
34	Ministry of Panchayati Raj	1,142.31	8.6	98	101.01	<div></div>
35	Ministry of Tourism	2,335.01	4.3	100	101.00	<div></div>
37	Ministry of AYUSH	1,705.60	4.3	73	89.86	<div></div>
38	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities	1,117.00	10.2	114	70.26	<div></div>
39	Ministry of Coal	3,546.00	8.6	305	66.74	<div></div>
40	Ministry of Culture	596.39	4.3	26	25.64	<div></div>
41	Department of Commerce	4,920.90	4.3	212	21.11	<div></div>
42	Ministry of Mines	440.00	4.3	19	18.47	<div></div>
39	Department of Pharmaceuticals	5,885.35	4.3	253	17.93	<div></div>
42	Dadre Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu	-	0.0	0	1.22	<div></div>
43	Department of Consumer Affairs	4,322.00	4.3	186	0.80	<div></div>
44	Ministry of Cooperation	1,340.01	0.00	0	0.0	<div></div>
TOTAL		1668260.61		139261.17	141088.60	
As per the Norms set by Jadhav commission			8.60%			
As per the NITI Ayog the proposed allocation			8.41%			
BE allocation			8.5%			

"Source: 1. https://e-utthaan.gov.in/public/pdf/data/Guidelines-Earmarking_DAPSC_DAPST.pdf, published by NITI Aayog, 01 Apr 2018

2. Source:Statement-3, FY 24-25 Expenditure of Ministries and Departments, Govt of India

"

diversions while promoting non-lapsable utilization. This approach builds on prior SCP and TSP strategies, catalysing inclusive development by ensuring targeted and specific area oriented schemes to bridge the development gaps. As evidenced by positive over-allocations from 16 Ministries/ Departments including Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Higher Education (371%), Social Justice & Empowerment (72.5%), Labour & Employment, Food & Public Distribution, School Education & Literacy, and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, in the previous FY 2025-26 SC budget. However the Department of Higher Education which is one of the most important Departments for the real development of the SC & ST students pursuing higher education has an allocation of Rs. 4,306.32 Cr in FY2025-26 with only Rs. 108.30 Cr targeted that accounts 2.5% of total Ministry Budget, and PM Research Fellowship at Rs. 108 Cr and Prime Minister's Girls' Hostel at Rs. 0.30 Cr), are the two targeted schemes and the rest of the schemes are allocated for the building of infrastructure and administrative development, which is a major concern for the communities. Conversely, under-allocators like Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (20.69%) highlight major gaps providing opportunities for landless SC/ST families in housing, sanitation, and safe drinking water, with huge amount of shortfalls in allocation in urban set up. Therefore, the role of NITI Aayog and other two nodal Ministries is indispensable to review these two DAPSC & DAPST budget frequently to bridge the development gaps, as the previous budget reveals that, the total allocation under DAPSC is 10.7% as against the 14.6% due share according to NITI Aayog guideline and only 3.9% is earmarked for targeted schemes, and for ST it is 8.2% against 8.41% due share with 3.3% targeted schemes, underscoring the need to reformulate non-targeted schemes for three-tier impacts, i.e. individual, family, and village/hamlet levels.

Despite robust mandates, significant implementation gaps persist in the DAPSC and DAPST budgets, requiring a more proactive oversight role for the nodal ministries, MSJE and MoTA. To bridge these gaps, the monitoring mechanism must move beyond the real-time data of the e-Utthan portal to include the scientific screening and reformulation of programs into targeted schemes with clearly defined physical targets and achievements. Furthermore, transparency and accountability should be bolstered by disclosing beneficiary lists in the public domain and ensuring that the Govt should fulfill their mandates to present the evaluations report of AWSC and AWST implementation in Parliament. Ultimately, NITI Aayog should publish an exclusive outcome and output budget for these two DAPSC & DAPST Budget

to ensure that financial allocations translate into the sustainable socio-economic development of the intended communities.

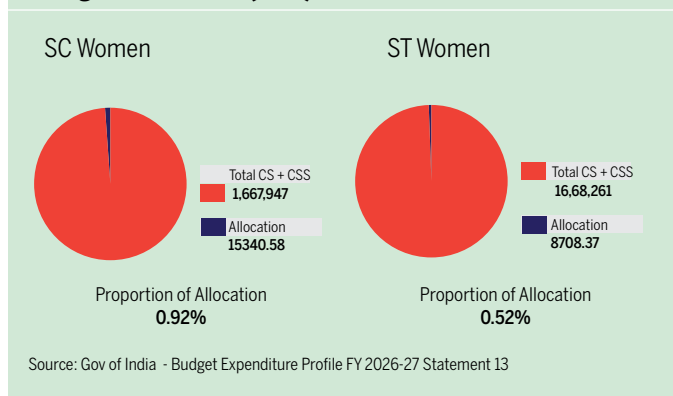
Gender Budget

Over the years the Gender budget has observed increases in allocation under various schemes and programmes which reflects the interest in enhancing gender justice and equality in the country. The government of India is indeed looking and moving forward with a vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 with women empowerment as one of the important focus areas. Some schemes and programmes which cater to the nutritional, sexual and reproductive health rights, livelihood and education have created an impact on these developmental thematic areas across the country. What is more concerning is not the lack of schemes and programmes and vision for gender justice but it is the lack of adequate, equitable, adaptable, diverse and inclusive allocation and distribution. Therefore, it can be said that just having the schemes and programmes without any targeted, intended and justified distribution would continue to expand the gaps of inequality when it comes to Gender justice. Pressing to the fact that there is an urgent need to expand the Gender definition and periphery to ensure that Gender budgeting has a larger community to serve other than just Women.

India introduced the Gender Budget statement in the fiscal year of 2005-2006, marking the new milestone in the development planning which dedicates certain aspects and reservation for the gender marked development initiatives in the country. This statement is a lot more than just a reserved allocation for meeting the needs, rather a hallmark of an important indicator to understand and progressive the intent through action to achieve gender equality. India ranks 131st out of 148 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2025 and stands below the average in terms of global average. As per the UNDP Human Development Report on Gender Inequality Index (GII), India ranks 108th out of 193 countries, with regards to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index- 2025-26 edition, India ranks 131st out of 181 countries.

In the last FY 2025-26, the total allocation under the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) was Rs.4.49 lakh crore, and for this FY 2026-27, the total allocation under GBS is Rs.500878.73cr. This means there is an increase of Rs.52850.05cr. in allocation from that of the last FY. There is indeed an increase in the trend of allocation under GBS

Figure 5: Allocation for SC and ST Women in Gender Budget Statement (GBS)- 2024-25 Amount in Rs.Cr.



in the country but what is really significant for us is to understand its relevance, adequacy, focused group and accountability.

Diving deeper into the allocation, Part A of the GBS has some of the very important and big schemes which had total allocation of Rs.1,05,535cr. for FY2025-26. Schemes from Part A are mostly under the MOWCD and Home affairs with primary focus on the delivery of justice to Right to Life and Protection such as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, Samarthya schemes, Nirbhaya fund, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Aajeevika (recently shifted to Part A), Women Help Desks in Police forces and Prime Minister's Girl's Hostel. Under Part A, total of Rs1919.16cr. has been allocated from AWSC and Rs.691.32cr, has been allocated from AWST for schemes.

Also, in the latest NCRB Report, 'Crimes in India 2023' released in September 2025 the crimes against the Scheduled Castes were 57,789 registered cases with a marginal increase of 0.4% from that of the previous report of 2022. Similarly, crimes against Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) were 12,960 registered cases. Low conviction rates and high pendency under POA Act is another major serious problem which makes us question the justice delivery system in the country.

The legal justice for SC and ST women still seems to be hanging by a thread, considering the rising incidence of atrocities against women from SC and ST communities. The number of caste-based atrocities, particularly in heinous forms, is increasing every year. A shocking denial of justice has been witnessed, as we can see an increase in allocation under the 'Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of the PCR Act, 1955 and POA Act, 1989', while crimes against SC and ST women continue to rise and dominate the charts. Nevertheless, for FY 2026-27,

the total allocation under the above-mentioned schemes is Rs 550.00 crore for SCs, and there is no allocation under the same schemes for STs. Since atrocities against women from both SC and ST communities are continuously rising, the absence of allocation for ST women poses a serious threat to their protection against such atrocities.

From the lens of the Dalit and the Adivasi gender justice, this financial year of 2026-27 has brought some noticeable but not so remarkable changes in the gender budget allocation. In the last FY 2025-26, the overall allocation for the ST and SC women were Rs.9,431cr. and Rs18,852 cr. respectively as per the Gender budget statement (GBS), whereas in the current financial year (2026-27) it is Rs.1667946.58Cr. for SC Women and Rs 500878.73cr. for ST women. This can be translated that, out of the total Gender Budget Allocation only 1 % of the same was allocated for SC women and 0.52 % for the ST women. There is an urgent need for the shift in addressing the GBS from the view of allocation rather it is much needed to be seen from the outcome impact view of this allocation. This means that the actual tangible and measurable outcome are being witnessed in terms of improvised status of the women in social- economic, health and other development areas.

In the GBS another important area to look at when half of the workforce is underpaid, underestimated and underrepresented. Just pushing for the health and welfare aspiration would not bring the desired quality result if the drivers to these changes such as the frontline health workers in the rural, sub urban and urban areas are largely underpaid, trampled under the performance pressures. There are incidences where the health workers were reported of having mental shutdown, stress outburst and sadly some end up committing suicides as well.

The recent NFHS data has shown that SCs and ST women are more in numbers when it comes to MMR, Anemia, Malnutrition and high risk during child birth and also, they continue to face discrimination while seeking the health services. Despite these there are no specific and targeted programmes and schemes apart from the universal schemes of Poshan, JSY, etc. It is time that the government takes a hint on the unchanging pattern of anaemia, malnutrition and MMR, as it has been observed that over the decades the large population suffering from anaemia, malnutrition and MMR has to be always led by SCs and ST women. This indicates that there has to be a specific, exclusive and impact-based schemes and programmes for improving their health and wellbeing. In the GBS, only three schemes' allocation is given under the Ministry of Women

Fig - 7: Suggested Schemes (Peoples' Budget) (Rs in Cr)










Name of the Schemes	SC Schemes	ST Schemes
 Higher Education		
PM Research Fellowship Schemes for SC/ST students	900.00	500.00
Paramedical and nursing colleges for SC/ST girls	500.00	300.00
Top Class Residential Coaching for SC Students	800.00	400.00
Boys Hostels in every district headquarters - 640	500.00	300.00
girls hostels in every district head-quarters - 640	600.00	400.00
Remedial coaching in english language	300.00	200.00
B.R Ambedkar Universities in 10 states - Punjab, Bengal, U.P, Bihar, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, M.P, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana	20000.00	0.00
 Agri Coop		
Minor irrigation programme for SC/ST farmlands	400.00	200.00
Sustainable Agriculture Grants for SC/ST Farmers	450.00	250.00
Providing long-term and sort-term credit system for SC/ST Women	540.00	250.00
Horticulture and sericulture scheme for SC/ST	200.00	100.00
 Agriculture Research		
Agricultural Training Institute for SC/ST	300.00	200.00
 AHDF		
District Level SC/ST Dairy Cooperatives Scheme	500.00	300.00
Livestock Development Fund for SC/ST Family	300.00	300.00
Small Scale Entrepreneurship Fund for Goat, Pig, Hen and Cow Breeding	400.00	300.00
 DWS		
Community Well Regeneration Scheme in SC/ST Localities	300.00	200.00
Provision for Drinking Water for SC/ST families	500.00	300.00
 Health Family Welf		
Modernization of Health Centres in SC/ST Areas	500.00	300.00
Paramedical and nursing colleges for SC/ST girls	1000.00	600.00
Financial Medical Assistance for SC/ST Families	800.00	500.00
Superspeciality hospital for Malaria, TB, Hypertension, sickle cells, and other diseases in SC/ST Areas.	2000.00	1000.00
Health Contingency fund at Municipal level for SC/ST community	1000.00	800.00
 Housing		
Ambedkar Model Affordable Housing Scheme for SC/ST Women	3000.00	0.00
Birsa Munda Model Affordable Housing Scheme for SC/ST Women	0.00	12000.00
Housing Scheme in Disaster prone for SC/ST Families	2000.00	1000.00
Housing Loan on Subsidised Interest rate to SC/ST Man/Women	1500.00	800.00
Savitri Bai Phule SC/ST Woman Housing Programme	1500.00	1000.00
 Labour & Employment		
Rehabilitation and Protection of SC Child Labour	300.00	200.00
Top class coaching for competitive exams	500.00	300.00
Establishment of Employment Centre for SC/ST Labour	1200.00	600.00
 MSME		
Standup Fund for Unemployed SC	2500.00	1500.00
SC/ST Innovation fund for employment generation activities	2000.00	1000.00
Credit Support Program for SC/ST educated unemployed youth for Self Employment	1500.00	1000.00
Special SC/ST Women Employment Fund	2000.00	1000.00

Fig - 7: Suggested Schemes (Peoples' Budget) (Rs in Cr)






Name of the Schemes	SC Schemes	ST Schemes
Interest free credit Support loan for SC/ST Women SHG Group upto Rs 5 Cr without and guarantee	2500.00	0.00
Providing loans to the SC/ST Women SHG Groups through Start-up India Program	1200.00	800.00
Providing financial support to the SC/ST youths who are engaged in Gig sector	1200.00	700.00
Financial support for the SC/ST workers engaged in Ship breaking industries	1000.00	900.00
Market Development Programme for SC/ST Farmers Product	2500.00	1500.00
 Rural Development		
Unemployment Allowance for SC/ST BPL Individual/Families	2000.00	1500.00
Restoration of Alienated land for STs	0.00	2000.00
 School Education		
500 state of the art modern schools for SC/ST students	10000.00	7000.00
Inclusion Cells in Schools	500.00	300.00
Appointment of SC/ST Teachers in Rural Areas	1500.00	1000.00
Special Teacher Training Programme on Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion	800.00	500.00
High class hostels for SC/ST Students at district headquarters	2000.00	1500.00
Appointment of Permanent SC/ST Women Cooks	1500.00	1000.00
Special Nutritional Supplements	500.00	300.00
 Skill Development		
Training Capacity Building and Entrepreneurship Development for SC/ST Youth	600.00	400.00
 Social Justice		
Implementation of SC/ST POA Act	3000.00	2000.00
Finance Development Corporation for SC Woman	2000.00	1000.00
Insurance scheme for Criminally assaulted SC/ST Woman	300.00	200.00
Scaling up NFSC to all SC PhD Students	1500.00	800.00
Pre-Medical Coaching and Scholarship for SC/ST Students	1000.00	600.00
Special fund for protection and empowerment of SC/ST Woman	1500.00	1000.00
Special Development funds for Nomadic, semi-nomadic and Vimuktajatis of SCs and STs.	2000.00	1000.00
Establishment of Centers in Universities for study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy	3000.00	1500.00
Special Fast Track Court for Speedy Trial of SC/ST Cases	6000.00	3000.00
SC & ST fellowship for non-NET research students	2000.00	1000.00
Compensation to Victims	5000.00	2000.00
B.R Ambedkar Centres for learning and libraries in SC ST dominated districts	5000.00	2000.00
Rehabilitation of Women Ex. Manual Scavengers	2500.00	2000.00
Formation of Special POCSO Courts to Trail SC/ST Cases	4000.00	3000.00
Overseas Scholarship for SC/ST Woman	6000.00	4000.00
National Single Window Helpline for SC/ST Students	2500.00	2000.00
Fellowships for SC- ST students under exchange programmes to foreign universities	7000.00	2000.00
Establishment of SC - ST Research institutes	12000.00	4000.00
 Tribal Affairs		
Innovation fund for Tribal Cooperatives and Tribal Entrepreneurship	10000.00	5000.00

Fig - 7: Suggested Schemes (Peoples' Budget) (Rs in Cr)

Name of the Schemes	SC Schemes	ST Schemes
Special fund for FRA Implementation	500.00	2000.00
Special fund for implementation of PESA in Schedule Areas	300.00	3000.00
Special Mission for Development of Minor Forest Produce	400.00	2000.00
Model Schools for SC/ST Girls	12500.00	15000.00
Schools of international Standard at State Level for SC/ST Students	16000.00	12000.00
Special Development Fund for most Vulnerable Tribal Groups	18.00	3000.00
Women Child		
Establishment of Mini health centres in SC/ST Habitants	10000.00	4000.00
Financial Medical Assistance for SC/ST Women	5000.00	2000.00
Special Child Protection Mission for SC/ST Children	800.00	400.00
Targeted Health Coverage for Migrants SC/ST Children	500.00	200.00
Appointment of SC/ST Caretakers	500.00	300.00
Rehabilitation of Trafficked SC/ST Women	1000.00	400.00
WR RD GR		
Canal Construction Programme for SC/ST farmland	700.00	300.00
Water Catchment Area Development Programme for SC/ST	500.00	400.00
Youth Sports		
Special Sports program for SC/ST youths under Khelo India	1000.00	1000.00
Overseas Training for SC/ST Sports Persons	5000.00	3000.00
Road Transport and Highways		
Providing land to the SC/ST Entrepreneurs in the roadside of the National & State High ways	15000.00	3000.00
Subsidied loan to the SC/ST Entrepreneurs in the roadside of the National & State High ways	12000.00	661.00
Skill development training for SC/ST Entrepreneurs in the roadside of the National & State High ways	3000.00	1000.00
Grand Total Due	239,607.84	139261.17

NOTE:- 1. In the Union Budget FY2026-27 with reference to Fig -1 Total Targeted Schemes for SCs is Rs.75,077 Cr. and STs Rs.62,093 Cr. with the total gap of SC allocation is Rs.1,64,530 Cr. and Rs. 77,168 Cr. for STs. The above table details of suggested schemes are for closing the Gap in the allocation.

and Child Development. However, it is evident that health and wellbeing are some of the core areas which needs targeted attention of the government for the marginalized community of SCs and STs. Under Mission Shakti schemes, Rs.272.35cr. has been allocated for SC women and yet again, there is no clear earmarking of funds under various heads of this scheme, so it is hard to figure out the exact distribution of allocations under each head. A similar trend is seen Under Part B of GBS, POSHAN shakti Nirman scheme which has been allocated Rs.211.82cr. for SC and Rs. 59.15cr. for ST in this FY.

There is a need for addressing the occupational health hazard and concerns of the women especially those working in the unorganized sectors which is risky and hazardous at different stances such as sanitation, construction, textiles and other menial works, their health security is a major

concern. Many SC women working in the sanitation and plantation such as sugarcane plantation, stone quarries reported having their uterus removed without their consent and awareness which is a serious Human rights violence and must be addressed.

In terms of education, one of the important schemes, Post Matric Scholarship for SC Children has a total allocation of Rs. 6360cr. for SC children (which means the share of the girl children is Rs.1908cr.), which shows a noticeable increase of Rs.460cr from that of previous FY (allocation under this scheme was Rs.5900 cr.).Under National Overseas Scholarship schemes there is a decrease of Rs.5cr. and this year the allocation for the scheme is Rs125cr. Along with this, there have been reports of not giving this NOS award timely and delayed response from the responsible department has also caused a great amount of stress and lack of direction among the SC children looking for overseas education. Educational rights of the children of SC and ST community must be viewed from a lens other than just the economic status which often dilutes their marginalization and gravity of vulnerability with those who share the similar economic status but are not exposed to the caste-based discrimination. We strongly recommend for exclusive schemes for the improved health and wellbeing of the SC women especially those working in the unorganized sectors such as construction, textiles, farm labors as well as women who are engaged in sanitation works as their exposure to the hazardous component are alarmingly higher than the rest. There is a dire need for the invested interest of the government to protect the rights to life, dignity, equal wage and income security of the SC and ST women who are exploited in the hands of the contractual workers especially seen and observed among the migrant workers.

There is also a need to acknowledge the issues, challenges and developmental needs of the sexual minority groups in the country. It is also recommended that there should be adequate, targeted and right based developmental plan and allocation for the SC and ST women in the country which is perceived from the lens of the intended uplift of this marginalized section of the community, not diluting their urgency and gravity of the situation with women they do not share the equal socio-economic and political status.

Youth Employment

India's youth are often framed as a "demographic dividend", but for SC/ST youth this dividend remains deeply unequal. Over 6.3 crore SC and 3.1 crore ST persons fall in the 18–35 age group, yet they continue to face the highest exposure to

unemployment, informality and caste-based exclusion in the labour market. Recent data shows a decline in overall youth unemployment to around 10–10.2% (2023–24). However, this improvement masks a deeper crisis. For the financial year 2026-27, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has allotted a very small budget of Rs 362.54 Cr for SC and Rs 189 Cr for ST. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has increased the allocated amount from Rs. 853.68 Crs to Rs 1,484.50 Cr for SCs and Rs. 471.89 to Rs 803.97 Cr for STs. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has allocated Rs 5301.35 Cr for SCs and Rs 2,768.17 Cr for STs. Some of the schemes under these ministries for SCs are: a) Khelo India: the budget is Rs 168.50 Cr. b) National Service Scheme: the budget is Rs 99.33 Cr. c) Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs: the budget is Rs 1019.70 Cr. d) Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana: the budget is Rs 3337.82 Cr. e) Skill India Programme: the budget is Rs 464.80 Cr and the schemes for STs are: a) Khelo India: the budget is Rs 101 Cr. b) National Service Scheme: the budget is Rs 38.86 Cr. c) Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs: the budget is Rs 528.10 Cr. d) Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana: the budget is Rs 1731.55 Cr. e) Skill India Programme: the budget is Rs 275.87 Cr.

The India Employment Report 2024 (ILO–IHD) highlights that most new jobs for youth are informal, low-paid, insecure, and often in self-employment or unpaid family work. Regular salaried employment for young people has declined, and waiting periods for decent jobs remain long, especially for educated youth. This crisis is sharper for SC/ST youth, who are disproportionately concentrated in casual labour, construction, sanitation, mining, and gig-platform work, where caste discrimination, low pay and absence of social security persist. Targeted disaggregated national data on caste and youth employment remains scarce, underscoring a key gap. PLFS (Periodic Labour Force Survey)²⁷ data consistently shows that SC youth have higher labour force participation rates than upper-caste youth, yet they are far less likely to be in regular salaried employment. This exposes a caste paradox: SC youth are not unemployed by choice—they are pushed into early, low-paid and unsafe work, often before completing education. PLFS and CMIE trends show urban youth unemployment consistently higher than rural, with SC migrants concentrated in informal construction, sanitation, delivery, and warehouse work.

Access to Justice:

The Government of India enacted the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and strengthened it through amendments in 2015, to establish a comprehensive legislative and administrative framework to prevent caste-based atrocities, ensure justice, and provide relief and rehabilitation to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Effective access to justice under this law depends not only on the existence of legal provisions, but also on adequate institutional capacity, financial support, and coordinated implementation across police, prosecution, and judicial systems.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are key instruments through which the Union Government supports State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in implementing laws and programmes that fall under the State List. Since 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, the responsibility for prevention, registration, investigation, and prosecution of atrocity crimes under the SC/ST (PoA) Act rests primarily with the States and UT Administrations. To incentivise and support this responsibility, the Union Government provides financial assistance under CSS in a 50:50 sharing ratio with States and UTs with legislatures, and 100% central funding for UTs without legislatures. This assistance is routed through the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India, and is intended to strengthen the implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989.

The CSS components for access to justice include: strengthening SC/ST Protection Cells and Special Police Stations under Section 21(2)(iv) of the PoA Act and Rule 8 of the PoA Rules; strengthening judicial mechanisms through the establishment of Special Courts and Exclusive Special Courts, and appointment of Special and Exclusive Public Prosecutors under Sections 14 and 15(2) of the PoA Act for speedy trials; provision of immediate relief, compensation, and socio-economic rehabilitation of victims and their dependents under Section 21(2)(iii) of the Act and Rule 12(4) of the Rules; awareness generation and publicity regarding rights and protections under Rules 3(1)(viii) and 3(1)(ix); operation of national helplines; and promotion of inter-caste marriages and other special interventions by States and UTs.

²⁷ https://dge.gov.in/dge/sites/default/files/2024-10/Annual_Report_Periodic_Labour_Force_Survey_23_24.pdf

Despite the existence of a statutory and financial framework, caste-based atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to rise, reflecting deep-rooted structural failures in prevention and protection. According to the Crime in India report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 57,789 cases against SCs and 12,960 cases against STs were registered in 2023. Over the five-year period from 2019 to 2023, crimes against Scheduled Castes increased by 25.8%, rising from 45,935 to 57,789 cases, while atrocities against Scheduled Tribes escalated more sharply by 57%, from 8,257 to 12,960 cases.

Gender Based Violence against the SC and ST women keep increasing. Due to the intersectionality of caste and gender women are more subjected to violation and exploitation. Rape against SC women and children increased 20.9% and rape against Adivasi women and children increased 7.1% over five years from 2019-2023. Twelve SC women and girls are raped every day in India. Meaning 1 SC woman or girl is raped every two hours. To be specifically every day 8 SC women and 4 SC children are raped in India. With regard to Adivasi women and children, rape against them increases 7.1 % over the five years and 3 Adivasi women and children are raped in India. Particularly stalking and voyeurism against SC women also saw the increase with 25.6% and 38.9% respectively signalling expand of forms of surveillance and intimidation controlling SC women's mobility and dignity. Crimes under the POCSO with specific to SC children shows the steepest increase. Assault of children under POCSO indicates a 50.8% increase which highlights the vulnerability of the minors.

The pendency rate in atrocity cases is alarmingly high for SCs with 93.8% and STs with 93% in the year 2023. According to the annual report submitted by the MSJE under SC/ST Act²⁸. Only 194 Exclusive Special Courts are established across 498 districts in India covering only 39% of the all districts. The persistently high pendency of cases clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of Special Courts and Exclusive Special Courts, the shortage and limited effectiveness of Special and Exclusive Special Public Prosecutors, and the overall weakness of institutional mechanisms envisaged under the scheme for effective implementation of the SC/ST (PoA) Act.

In this context of rising atrocities, low conviction rates, and massive pendency, budgetary allocations play a critical role in strengthening access to justice. For FY 2026–27, the total

allocation for protection of SCs and STs under the scheme of strengthening of machinery for enforcement of Civil Rights Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 stands at Rs. 550 Crs, representing a 18.8% increase compared to FY 2025–26. It is pertinent to note that allocations under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for strengthening these mechanisms declined from Rs. 550 Crs in FY 2024–25 to Rs. 463 Crs in FY 2025–26, but for the FY 2026-27 it is again increased to the equal level of allocation in the FY 2024-25 without any further new increase to meet the adequate amount fund.

This allocation is grossly insufficient to meet the requirements for victim relief, socio-economic rehabilitation, legal support, and institutional strengthening, including Special Police Stations, Exclusive Special Courts, and the inter-caste marriage scheme across States and Union Territories. It is pertinent to note that in FY 2024–25, despite a lower budget allocation, 90% of the total budget estimate under this scheme was utilised. On the contrary, even when implementation remained ineffective and far below the scheme's intended scope, expenditure reached 90 % of the allocated funds. This clearly indicates that the present budgetary allocation is very much inadequate. Rather, allocations need to be significantly higher than the current levels to meet actual requirements.

The Gender Budget of the union government specifies the fund allocated to women and girls for all schemes. Despite the double intersectional violence and exploitation faced by SC/ST women and girls, the allocated budget for the FY 2026-27 is Rs. 165 Cr. Both total budget and gender budget under this scheme has seen the same trajectory compared to FY 2025-26, which is an increase by 18.8% but yet not sufficient to address the growing violence.

However, the FY 2026-27 allocation is the same as the budget allocated in the FY 2024-25. Therefore, the increase of budget cannot be noted as a real increase, but just an attempt to meet the reduction made in the FY 2025-2026.

In light of the rising incidence of caste-based atrocities, persistently low conviction rates, and alarmingly high pendency of cases, there is an urgent need to substantially enhance budgetary allocations under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for effective implementation of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

28 <https://socialjustice.gov.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/62901726565718.pdf>

The Dr. Ambedkar National Relief to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Victims of Atrocities Scheme was created under the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE). Relief under this scheme was provided as additional relief of up to Rs. 5 lakh, over and above the amount given by the State Governments. The purpose of the scheme was to provide national-level relief directly by the Union Government to victims of atrocities, as relief amounts are generally provided only by the concerned State Governments.

However, in 2023, with effect from 1 April, the Dr. Ambedkar National Relief to the SC/ST Victims of Atrocities Scheme and the Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages were merged with the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, thereby discontinuing the additional relief provided by the Union Government to victims of atrocities. This scheme needs to be separated from the CSS and restored under the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation as an independent scheme, with a dedicated line of funding, to ensure timely additional relief to victims of atrocities.

The Union Government must prioritise increased and targeted fund allocation under this head to strengthen police investigation capacity, ensure the full operationalisation of Special and Exclusive Special Courts, and guarantee the appointment and sustained functioning of dedicated Special and Exclusive Special Public Prosecutors across all States and Union Territories.

Adequate and timely funds must be earmarked for immediate relief, victim compensation, and comprehensive socio-economic rehabilitation, including land, housing, education, and livelihood support. Without a significant and sustained increase in financial commitment and institutional accountability, access to justice for SCs and STs will remain limited, undermining both the intent of the law and the constitutional guarantee of equality before law. The Detailed Demand for Grant of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the FYs 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 are not updated in the ministry's website which limits the accessibility of citizens to know further segregation of the budget allocated and spent in the previous years. The latest DDG available in the website is for FY 2023-24 only.

Nirbhaya Fund: Need for establishing exclusive 'One stop Centre' for SC and ST women and girls

The Nirbhaya Fund was established in 2013 following the 2012 Delhi gang rape incident, with the primary objective of supporting initiatives that enhance the safety and security of women across the country.

One of the most significant initiatives supported under the Nirbhaya Fund is the One Stop Centre (OSC) scheme, launched in 2015. OSCs aim to provide integrated support services to women survivors of violence under one roof. These services include medical assistance, legal aid, temporary shelter, and psycho-social counselling. The Union Government has envisioned the establishment of at least one OSC in every district. As of now, 876 OSCs have been set up across the country.²⁹

However, SC and ST women face a disproportionately higher risk of violence due to their multiple and intersecting identities of caste, gender, and socio-economic marginalisation. While OSCs are located primarily at district headquarters, this urban-centric approach often limits access for SC and ST women from rural and remote areas. Caste-based discrimination, fear of stigma, and the physical distance to district centres further restrict their ability to seek timely support.

Therefore, there is a critical need to establish exclusive and culturally sensitive OSCs for SC and ST women, tailored to address their specific vulnerabilities and access barriers. Moreover, the expansion of OSCs beyond district headquarters to sub-district, block, and town panchayat levels is essential. Such decentralisation would significantly improve access for rural, marginalised SC and ST women and girls, ensuring that the support mechanisms under the Nirbhaya Fund are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to intersectional realities.

Schemes for Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

Persons with disabilities (PwDs) are often left at the margins of India's socio-economic narrative. According to the 2011 Census, 2.68 crore persons in India live with disability, comprising about 2.21% of the population under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 definition. This demographic is made up of 2.45% (5,74,600) SC

²⁹ <https://missionshakti.wcd.gov.in/statisticsOsc>

and 2.05% (5,33,000) ST. However, more recent national surveys suggest that disability prevalence may be much higher, between 4–8% of the population, indicating 40–90 million Indians potentially living with impairments that affect participation in society and work. For SC and ST communities, the exclusion is deeply compounded by social marginalisation. PwDs from SC/ST groups face multiple barriers—poverty, inaccessible infrastructure, discrimination in education and employment, and weak outreach of welfare schemes. Less than 40% of PwDs have received a Unique Disability ID (UDID) that is essential to access most welfare programmes, leaving the majority invisible to policy and budgetary safeguards. Employment opportunities for PwDs remain dismal. Only 36% of PwDs participate in the workforce, compared to about 60% for non-disabled adults. Corporate India reflects this exclusion starkly; according to the PwD Inclusion Index 2025, 37.9% of listed companies have zero PwDs in permanent employment, and overall representation remains below 1% of corporate workforces. This is despite the RPwD Act's quota and anti-discrimination mandates. The Union Budget 2025 continued to underprioritise disability inclusion, allocating a minuscule share of total outlays to disability welfare, about 0.025% of the entire budget, despite record fiscal expansion in other sectors. Reductions in SC/ST disability allocation further worsen the picture for marginalised PwDs. The Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme has been revoked from the SC/ST budget. The scheme provided only Rs 300 per month to persons aged 18–79 years with severe or multiple disabilities, an amount that was already grossly insufficient and is now completely withdrawn.

Budget allocations for SCs and STs has increased for the fiscal year 2026-27. The SC allocation is now Rs 135.62 Cr from Rs 115.66 Cr, while the ST allocation has also increased to Rs 70.26 Cr from Rs 59.91 Cr in the previous fiscal year. Some of the key Schemes for SC Persons with Disabilities are: a) Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase or Fitting of Aids and Appliances: the budget allocation is Rs 74 Cr b) Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme the budget allocation is Rs 27.72 Cr c) Scheme for the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act: the budget allocation is Rs 20.75 Cr d) Scholarships for Students with Disabilities: the budget allocation is Rs 13.15 Cr. Some of the key Schemes for ST Persons a) Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase or Fitting of Aids and Appliances: the budget allocation is Rs 37 Cr. b) Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme the budget allocation is Rs 14.36 Cr c) Scheme for

the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act: the budget allocation is Rs 10.75 Cr d) Scholarships for Students with Disabilities: the budget allocation is Rs 8.15 Cr

Climate Resilience:

India has been the pivot of major climate and extreme weather events in 2025-26. A wide range of unusually severe weather phenomena, such as heatwaves and high temperatures, heavy rainfall and flooding, cyclones and storms, Cold and Mountain events, cloudbursts, occurred across the country, affecting millions of people, infrastructure, agriculture, and public health. The marginalized groups, especially the SC, suffer more because they often live in higher-risk areas like river banks, coastlines, low-lying zones, areas prone to floods, heatwaves, and droughts. Their capacities for adaptation and resilience to the climate impact are relatively low due to their weak socio-political and economic status, which is mainly associated with their caste identity. They have unstable incomes tied to climate-sensitive sectors, like farming, fishing, and daily wage work. Smallholder farmers and landless labourers suffered massive crop losses and property damage, deepening poverty and food insecurity. Loss and Damage funds are often slow or insufficient. Reports indicate that climate extremes in 2025 “pushed millions to their adaptation limits,” meaning people’s capacity to cope or prepare had run out, especially where public services, climate adaptation infrastructure, or insurance were weak³⁰. The crisis underscores the need for equitable adaptation policies, improved early warnings, resilient infrastructure, and financial support targeted at the most vulnerable.

In 2025, India is yet to submit its National Climate Action Plan to the UNFCCC, with a focus on building adaptive capacities and resilience across the country. India’s Economic Survey (IES) for 2024-25³¹ pointed out a growing problem: we’re not spending enough to adapt to climate change. Although spending on adaptation has increased from 3.7% of our GDP in the 2015-16 financial year to 5.6% in 2021-22, it’s still not enough. The challenge we face concerning the funds for addressing the issues of the marginalized communities impacted by the climate crisis in India is that the programs and policies for climate change adaptation are not designed with the right perspective, keeping their vulnerabilities in focus. Their exclusion from the decision-making, lack of a monitoring mechanism of the policies and programs, defective vulnerability mapping, biased response system, lack of political will in the adaptation programmes,

30 link: <https://www.outlookindia.com/climate-and-environment/2025-extreme-weather-pushed-millions-to-Dalit-Adivasi-Budget-Analysis-2026-27-27adaptation-limits-report>

31 Link chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/ <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/doc/eschapter/echap10.pdf>

and insufficient and untargeted funds are the significant obstructions in building resilience of the marginalized communities in coping with climate risks.

The NITI Aayog guidelines 2018 mandate the forty ministries and departments to allocate the budget proportionate to the population of the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes in the country. The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change is the nodal agency for the Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

By reviewing important schemes under key ministries and departments in the central budget from the perspective of CCA and DRR, we can estimate which department and which scheme can help SC and ST develop their adaptation and resilience capacities to cope with the impacts of climate change, and to what extent these schemes are beneficial for marginalized communities in terms of budget allocation and expenditure.

Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare:

Under this department, several schemes are in place to help build the resilience of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe farmers. Notably, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana received funds of Rs 2048 Cr and Rs 970.04 Cr for SCs and STs in FY 2025-26. In FY 2026-27, the allocation remains the same and has not changed.

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme received Rs 11,707.50 Cr for SCs and Rs 5657.50 Cr in the year 2025-26, respectively. The allocation for the current year 2026-27 for this scheme remains the same.

For the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Yojna (PM-AASHA), the budget earmarked for FY 2025-26 was Rs 1,726.39 Cr for SCs and Rs 696.95 Cr for STs and for FY 2026-27, the allocation is Rs 1314.72 Cr and Rs 681.12 Cr for SCs and STs.

We appreciate that the allocation under this department is proportionate to the total population of SCs and STs, but with the in-depth analysis of the outcome budget, it is learnt that there is no mention of SC and ST beneficiaries under these schemes, and being the general schemes, the SC and ST beneficiaries are not fully able to access the benefit of the schemes due to several legality and complexity in procedures. Therefore, we recommend introducing more targeted schemes and their proper utilization without any diversion and SC and ST beneficiaries should also be precisely mentioned in the outcome.

Environment, Forests and Climate Change:

The budget allocation for the FY 2025-26 under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change for the SC was only 4.7% of the total budget allocated to this ministry, and for ST it was 4.9%. In FY 2026-27, the trend continued, with allocations for SCs at 4.4% and for STs at 4.6%. This is a clear violation of NITI Aayog guidelines. The said ministry is the nodal agency for climate change, but, notably, no scheme under this ministry is useful for the welfare of the SCs and STs since these groups, being the most vulnerable, are impacted adversely due to the climate crisis. It is recommended to bring SC and ST-focused schemes to build their resilience against the impact of climate change with the "Build Back Better" (BBB) approach.

Fisheries:

Fishing is the main occupation of the SCs located on the riverside, and they are subjected to face intersecting climate, economic, and social vulnerabilities. They have to depend on the dominant class for borrowing boats and other items. During floods and cyclones, they suffer damage to boats, nets, and gear with inadequate compensation. Under the Department of Fisheries, the allocation for the scheme, namely Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), a significant scheme in terms of resilience and adaptation, obtained Rs 415 Cr in FY 2025-26 for SCs and Rs 246 Cr for STs. In FY 2026-27, the allocation for the same head is Rs 426 Cr and Rs 227 Cr for SCs and STs respectively. Again, the outcome budget indicates no specific mention of SCs and STs, and the PMMSY scheme is general, so accessing the benefit of the scheme is challenging for the SCs and STs communities. Secondly, the scheme provides the 60% subsidy to the SC/ST/Women beneficiaries but due to lack of land, boats, licenses, and access to water bodies, bank account, credit linkage, upfront investments, they are incapable of accessing the benefit of the scheme. Additionally, the SC fishing community does not have market access in absence of shipping trucks and insulated vehicles but again the subsidies are reimbursed later and there is inability in mobilizing the initial capital. In fact, they have to depend on the dominant community for that. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to build the resilience of the fishing communities when the majority of them belong to SC and ST. More targeted and specific need based provisions are required to be included in the scheme. The allocated budget under SC and ST is inadequate to fulfil the gap.

Drinking Water and Sanitation:

Accessing water has always been a struggle for the SC communities, and being prey to caste-based violence and discrimination for accessing water is not a new phenomenon. Caste is the main factor for inaccessibility to water for SCs due to little political will to invest resources in SC-inhabited areas for a constant and adequate water supply. The challenge also increases during the event of a disaster like a drought, particularly in the northern states, viz. Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, Marathwada region of Maharashtra. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation was allocated a total budget of Rs 74,226.02 Cr in FY 2025-26, of which Rs 10,154.90 Cr (13.6% of the total allocation) was allocated for SCs and Rs 4,615.90 Cr (6.21% of the total allocation) for STs. In FY 2026-27, the total allocation for the ministry is Rs 74,894.86 Crs, of which Rs 16,242.30 Cr (21.6% of total allocation) and Rs. 7382.90 Cr (9.8% of total allocation) for SCs and STs respectively. The scheme, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)/National Rural Drinking Water Mission, was introduced to provide safe and adequate drinking water to all rural households, initiated in 2019. A budget of Rs 8,800 Cr was earmarked for SCs and Rs 4,000 Cr for STs in FY 2025-26. It is increased this year to Rs. 14,887.40 Cr (19.8 % of total allocation) and Rs 6767 Crs (9% of total allocation) are allocated for SCs and STs compared to the previous year. It is a general scheme, so the SC and ST households are being excluded systematically. Hence, it is recommended to introduce the targeted schemes to ensure the fulfilment of clear drinking water.

New and Renewable Energy:

The marginalized communities have little contribution to carbon emission but they have to face the brunt of the climate crisis. The world is rapidly moving towards renewable energy. Renewable energy can be transformative for marginalized communities, but only if the transition is just, participatory, and rights-based. A just energy transition must place SC, ST, women, and the rural poor at its core, not at its margins. The inclusion of SCs and marginalized groups in India's renewable energy transition requires more than access to electricity; it needs structural, economic, and political inclusion. India has also committed to achieving the target of net-zero emissions by 2070, but vulnerable groups hardly get a place in the policies and programs under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MoNRE).

The ministry received Rs 26,549.38 Cr allocation in FY 2025-

26, and Rs 2,180 Cr is earmarked for SCs and Rs 2,258 Cr for STs. This year, the allocation is Rs 32,914.67 Cr under this ministry and Rs 2573 Cr is allocated for SCs and Rs 2665.97 Cr for STs.

For the specific scheme called Solar Power (Grid), the budget is earmarked as Rs 149.40 Cr for SCs and Rs 152.65 Cr for STs. The other scheme Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) received Rs 400 Crs for SCs and Rs 415 Crs for STs, which is double as compared to previous year. This is a general scheme, and like other general schemes, SCs have little access to this due to a lack of land and resources, particularly in rural spaces. Subsidies and rooftop solar benefits largely go to urban and middle-class households, with no coverage of SCs and STs. The poor households struggle with upfront costs, documentation, or credit access. Again the land ownership is a primary gatekeeper and land title is the main hurdle for the community and the farmer beneficiaries are also required to contribute 30-40% of the total cost and the subsidy comes after the installation. This is a huge challenge for our community. Therefore, special schemes with adequate funding and proper planning of expenditure should be introduced to avoid the exclusion of SCs and STs.³²

Child Rights:

Child rights in India cannot be understood outside the realities of caste. For SC/ST children, childhood itself is shaped by structural violence, manifested through poverty, discrimination in schools, unsafe living conditions, child labour, and heightened vulnerability to abuse. Despite constitutional guarantees and multiple child-centric laws, the lived realities of SC/ST children reveal a persistent failure of the Union Budget to translate rights into protection. India is home to nearly 47 crore children, of whom around 8 crore are from SCs and 4.5 crore from STs. Multiple national and international studies continue to show that SC/ST children face worse outcomes across nutrition, education, health, and protection indicators. According to NFHS-5, stunting, wasting, and anemia remain significantly higher among SC/ST children, reflecting intergenerational deprivation that budgetary interventions have failed to disrupt.

Our studies show that 22.8% of SC children aged 6–17 are out of school, and discrimination contributes heavily to dropout patterns among SC children, with even higher dropout ratios among SC girls.

32 <https://www.outlookindia.com/climate-and-environment/2025-extreme-weather-pushed-millions-to-adaptation-limits-report-chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/economicsurvey/doc/eschapter/echap10.pdf>

While India has near-universal enrolment at the primary level, dropout rates for SC/ST children rise sharply at secondary and higher secondary stages. Studies by NCERT, NUEPA and civil society organisations consistently document caste-based bullying, segregation in seating and meals, humiliating labour tasks, and teacher bias in government schools—especially in rural and tribal regions. These experiences directly contribute to school disengagement, early dropout, and psychological harm. Studies by UNICEF, NIMHANS and child rights organisations consistently show that children from marginalised social groups experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and trauma-related symptoms. Crucially, no national scheme explicitly recognises caste-based discrimination as a mental health risk factor, rendering SC/ST children invisible within policy frameworks. According to NFHS-5 (2019–21)-based analysis by UNFPA India, around 26% of women aged 20–24 from SC/ST communities were married before the age of 18, highlighting how caste continues to shape girls' life trajectories from early adolescence. Yet, Union Budget allocations continue to prioritise infrastructure and digital initiatives without earmarked funding to address caste discrimination in schools, grievance redress mechanisms, or psychosocial support for marginalised children. Residential schools and scholarships for SC/ST children remain underfunded relative to need, and hostel conditions continue to be unsafe and overcrowded.

Despite legal prohibitions under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the Right to Education Act, child labour persists—disproportionately affecting SC/ST children. Recent labour and rescue data show that a majority of children withdrawn from hazardous labour belong to SC/ST communities, working in agriculture, brick kilns, domestic work, mining, construction and informal urban services. The Union Budget's failure lies not only in weak enforcement allocations but also in its inability to address the economic compulsions that push SC/ST children into work. Declining real wages, informalisation of labour, seasonal migration, and inadequate social protection for parents directly

translate into child labour—yet child protection schemes remain fragmented and poorly resourced.

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reveals a disturbing pattern: Assault of children under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act is 50.8% who belong to SC/ST communities. This reflects the intersection of caste power, gender violence, and economic vulnerability. SC and ST children—especially girls—are at heightened risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking and abuse, often by dominant caste perpetrators, with low conviction rates and delayed justice. Despite this, Union Budget allocations for child protection institutions, special courts, victim compensation, and rehabilitation remain grossly inadequate. There is no caste-sensitive budgeting within child protection systems, and SC/ST children's specific vulnerabilities are not reflected in scheme design or monitoring frameworks.

For this financial year 2026-27, the total SC children's budget is Rs 26,617.76 Cr and the total ST children's budget is Rs 20,224.43 Cr. When compared to the total SC budget, the percentage comes to 13.55% and when compared to the total ST budget, the percentage comes to about 14.33%. The SC child budget against the development fund (CS+CSS) is a meagre 1.59% and the ST child budget against the development fund (CS+CSS) is again a meagre 1.21%. Further, the SC child-targeted schemes amount to Rs 3802.16 Cr, which comes to 0.22% of the SC budget, and the ST-targeted schemes amount to Rs 8028.48 Cr, which comes to 0.48% of the ST budget.



Recommendations

1. Legislation & Accountability Mechanisms

- Introduce a Central SCP&TSP Legislation: The government should enact a central law for the SCP & TSP Budget to legally bridge the development gaps and also link it with the SNA-SPARSH Framework
- Enforce transparency and Accountability: The law should mandate adherence to strict Legislative principles of transparency and accountability]to ensure fiscal discipline.
- To ensure these legislative mandates are met with actual spending and bridging the development gaps, all SC/ST targeted schemes are fully operationalized under the SNA SPARSH mechanism to increase budget credibility.
- Shifting from Post-facto accounting to proactive planning: Currently, NITI Aayog guidelines mandate a set percentage of 14.6% for SCs and 8.4% for STs from the total CSS+CS schemes. Therefore, instead of just meeting a percentage target, the two Nodal Ministries such as MSJE & MoTA should reformulate to prioritize targeted schemes over General and Non-targeted schemes in coordination with NITI Aayog.

2. Livelihood:

- Loan schemes and programmes for the income generation entrepreneurship / livelihood are promising and impactful and deliverable only if the intention meets the intended terms and conditions for availing the scheme's benefits. Therefore, we strongly recommend review and change in the terms and condition of the loan schemes in such a way that it is accessible. The delayed actions, denied request and unnecessary interference of the Banks and financial Institutions in disbursement of the loan amount must be taken into account and

timely intervention and legal action against this unjust treatment must be ensured.

3. Sanitation and Frontline Workers:

- We strongly recommend Reinstating the Human Rights aspect in the NAMASTE Schemes like the earlier SRMS Scheme. One important pressing demand of the sanitation workers especially women garbage pickers is the timely delivery of the medical assistance and health insurance as the heavy work of cart pulling is ruining their reproductive health. Even though being covered under the Ayushman Bharat schemes, they are being systemically delayed and denied timely medical assistance. Therefore, there has to be a special component of the medical insurance for the women sanitation workers along with the additional benefits of Ayushman Bharat.
- Mandate 20% of Fund allocation for the welfare and safety of the workers under the Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY). We recommend at least Rs.8000 Cr. (for welfare of workers and their dependents) and Rs.6000Cr. (for workers' safety) to expand the livelihood opportunities other than sanitation work under the SUY schemes to stop pushing SCs back into Sanitation work in different forms. Break this systemic push and provide assistance for scope of work outside of the sanitation work realm.

4. Education:

- The government must ensure timely disbursement of scholarships by strengthening Aadhaar Payment Bridge systems and holding entities accountable for delays.
- It is recommended that Post-Matric and National Overseas Scholarships (both awards & budget) be increased more and linked to tuition and inflation rates.

- To combat economic exclusion, costs for tuition, accommodation, and living for SC/ST students at IITs, IIMs, and central universities should be rationalized.
- Interest subsidies and collateral-free education loans are suggested for low-income SC/ST families pursuing vocational education.
- Budget allocations under the Department of Higher Education for SCs and STs should prioritize student-focused outcomes instead of general institutional grants.
- We strongly recommend to reconsider or restructure the PM Girls Hostel in order to protect educational opportunities for SC and ST girls as ensuring safe accommodation is vital for equitable access to education and long term socio-economic growth.
- In addition to implementing the Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions 2026, UGC should provide adequate resources for their effective implementation.

5. Land Rights and Agriculture:

- Redistribute at least 5 acres of land to SC&ST communities: There are no innovative schemes to help SC&ST communities reach a viable threshold of at least 5 acres of land. Therefore, Govt should earmark a portion of the agricultural budget under SC& ST Budget towards a dedicated land purchase scheme. This scheme should focus on the state-led acquisition of cultivable land to be redistributed to SC/ST families, with a specific priority for female heads of households, who currently hold only a tiny fraction of land (0.23 Crore for SC female and 0.16 Crore for ST female).

6. Formalize and Incentivize Women's Land Titling:

- There has been a marginal increase in female representation, like SC female holdings rising from 12.27% to 13.43%, land ownership remains overwhelmingly with males holding over 86%. Therefore, State governments particularly in states with lower female participation, should offer stamp duty exemptions or lower registration fees specifically for land registered in a woman's name.

7. Gender Justice

- 50% of the Budget must be allocated for SC ST women's issues under a Special SC ST Women's

component (DWC) within the SC and ST Budget

- We strongly recommend the mandate of the Outcome-based monitoring putting more emphasis on the annual audits of the measurable and tangible impact of the schemes and programmes especially among the women of the marginalized communities. Budgeted allocation, utilization and the schemes implementation needs to be audited regularly identifying the gaps and challenges in the delivery of gender justice and on the same time build on the good practices for the betterment of the women of the marginalized community.
- We suggest the increase in allocation in terms of wages, reduction in the immense burden of piles of files and reports by employing more frontline workers in Sanitation, Public health, community-based institutions such as Anganwadi centers, early childcare centers etc. Earmark at least Rs.5000Cr. for increase in wage, health support and other work-related support systems for the frontline workers who are continuously exposed to hazards and exhaustion. Ensure work with which women are engaged such as Sanitation workers, ASHA workers, Care workers, Domestic workers, ANM, Anganwadi workers, migrant and contractual workers Dignified, respectful in terms of wages and support as well.

8. Youth Employment:

- Increase allocations for SC/ST component within youth employment and skilling schemes by at least 50%, with a mandatory earmarking for transition into regular salaried employment rather than short-term or informal placements. This increase should prioritise SC/ST youth in urban informal sectors such as construction, sanitation, logistics, and gig work.
- Create a dedicated "SC ST Youth Employment Security Fund" with an initial allocation of Rs 500 Cr. This fund will support wage subsidies for first-time SC/ST youth workers, expansion of urban employment guarantee pilots, and placement-linked incentives for employers offering secure, non-discriminatory employment.
- Allocate Rs 200 Cr for caste-disaggregated labour data and monitoring systems across PLFS, Skill India, and youth employment programmes. This allocation will enable regular collection, publication, and analysis of SC/ST youth

employment outcomes, including job quality, wages, and contract security.

9. Access to Justice

- There should be a separate scheme for the effective implementation of Prevention of Atrocities act and must have an allocation not lesser than Rs. 1000 Cr to address the increasing atrocities against SC and ST. 50 % of the fund must be spent for SC and ST women to address the intersectional violence against them.
- Create separate budget lines specifically for victim's compensation and rehabilitation, Police; special police stations, Special Protection cell, Judicial: establishment of exclusive special court, exclusive special public prosecutor, free legal aid, and Awareness generation under the allocation of effective implementation of PoA and PCR Act making the state governments to be transparent and accountable. Which will also facilitate the state machineries to address the specific need.
- The compensation amount needs to be revised. As per the amendment 2016 of SC/ST Rules, the minimum compensation is Rs. 85,000/- it includes cruel atrocities such as preventing vote and filing nomination in election, intimidating PRI members from performing, social and economic boycott and giving false complaints. Minimum compensation amount under atrocity act should be increased to 5 lakhs rupees. The same has to be revised for other atrocities as well based on its severity.
- Specifically for murder and rape the compensation amount needs to be increased from 8 lakhs to 25 lakhs.
- The Dr. Ambedkar National Relief to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Victims of Atrocities Scheme should be delinked from the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the implementation of the PCR Act and the SC/ST (PoA) Act and restored as an independent scheme under the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, with a separate budget line, to enable the Union Government to provide timely additional relief to victims of atrocities, over and above the relief extended by State Governments.

10. Children:

- Significantly increase the budget for child labour prevention initiatives targeting SC/ST children

by 50%. This increased funding will support enhanced educational support programmes, expansion of residential schools and hostels, alternative income-generation opportunities for families, and sustained community engagement to prevent child labour.

- Establish a "Child Rights Monitoring Fund" with an initial allocation of Rs 250 Cr, focused explicitly on SC/ST children. This fund will support caste-disaggregated data collection, tracking of dropout and exclusion patterns, independent audits of child protection systems, and the design of targeted corrective interventions.
- Allocate Rs 200 Cr for strengthening child protection and justice mechanisms for SC/ST children, including POCSO special courts, survivor compensation, counselling services, and rehabilitation programmes, with priority for SC and ST girls facing caste- and gender-based violence.
- Introduce a dedicated allocation of Rs 100 Cr for school-based, caste-sensitive mental health programmes, recognising discrimination, segregation, and violence as key contributors to psychological distress among SC and ST children

11. Public Health:

- The government should ensure that allocations for SCs and STs under various health initiatives, including NHM, PMJAY, Jan Aushadhi, and PM POSHAN, remain intact and are not misappropriated.
- There is a need to prioritize rural health infrastructure in districts with significant SC/ST population, with immediate action to fill over 80% of vacant specialist positions through incentives for rural deployment.
- To combat caste-based discrimination in healthcare, it is essential to implement mandatory caste-sensitivity training for health workers, directly tying it to performance appraisals and job confirmations.
- The Ayushman Bharat program must operate transparently, incorporating real-time audits, social monitoring, and grievance helplines to prevent informal payments that disadvantage the economically marginalized SC and ST families.

- Expanding community-led health initiatives by training health care workers from SC and ST backgrounds is critical for enhancing early detection and preventive care.
- Access to affordable medication should be improved by increasing the number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras in rural and SC/ST areas and ensuring that public hospitals adhere to generic drug prescription policies.
- Furthermore, public health expenditure needs to rise above 1.3% of GDP with clear, measurable outcomes for the health indicators of SCs and STs.
- Special emphasis must be placed on the health of SC and ST women, with tailored interventions for maternal, reproductive, and mental health that address the complexities of caste and gender.
- There is no allocation for tertiary care programmes for both SC and ST communities, which threatens equitable access to advanced medical treatment, risking catastrophic health expenses or denial of care for vulnerable families. We recommend reconsidering it to ensure continued access to life saving healthcare and promote equitable development.

12. Social Security:

- Social security schemes like pension, health insurance and food subsidies may alleviate immediate hardship but do not ensure upward mobility without access to education, skills, or better educational opportunities. Therefore, social security for SCs and STs should prioritise capability building over mere protection.
- Strengthening social security for SCs and STs households requires targeted responses such as expanding hostels and rental support for urban students and job seekers, creating employment transition program for graduates, providing income support tied to skill training participation, and offering community based career counselling in SC and ST majority areas to reduce dropout between education and employment.
- Employment linked social security can be strengthened by integrating skill development with job opportunities through apprenticeship, incentives for firms hiring SC and ST candidates, public-private partnerships, and post training job

guarantees with placement tracking.

- Entrepreneurship in SC and ST communities is limited by poor access to credit and networks; support can be strengthened through expanded credit and venture capital funds, credit guarantees, better market linkages, supplier diversity and procurement quotas to foster long term income and job creation.
- For SC/ST informal workers ensure universal social security through simplified registrations system, portable benefits for migrants, stronger employment and wage support, expanded health insurance and pensions, and improved livelihood through skill training and credit support.

13. People with Disabilities:

- Substantially increase the budget for disability welfare schemes by at least 40%, with a clearly demarcated SC/ST sub-allocation to address compounded caste- and disability-based exclusion in education, employment, and social protection.
- Allocate a dedicated budget line of Rs 300 Cr for intersectional disability inclusion, specifically targeting SC/ST Persons with Disabilities. This allocation will support community-based outreach, last-mile UDID enrolment in SC bastis and ST habitations, training of frontline service providers, and the establishment of district-level accessibility and inclusion committees.
- Allocate Rs 150 Cr for accessible education and skilling infrastructure in SC/ST-dominated regions, including assistive technologies, barrier-free campuses, hostels, and scholarships for SC and ST PwDs.

14. Climate Resilience:

- It is strongly recommended to bring a separate and exclusive Climate Budget covering the programs and schemes for climate change adaptation and resilience primarily for the SCs and STs..
- Budgets for DRR (integrated with CCA) should be based on a scientific and inclusive mapping that is based on the intersectionality of recurrent disaster risk-prone and climate-sensitive areas and social vulnerability, like caste, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and age. This

mapping should result in an atlas of vulnerability-disaster risk for the country. Budgets should be allocated in a targeted manner for each sector of CCA based on this mapping/atlas.

- The budget allocation for climate resilience and adaptation should also follow the principles of SCP-TSP, as the allocation should be based on the proportion of the population of SCs and STs.
- DRR budgeting should focus on resilience (elimination of vulnerability) based on robust social security entitlements instead of merely focusing on the livelihoods, immediate compensation of losses & damages, automatic resettlement in the event of displacement due to disasters - the SOPs should be local, the approval and disbursements should be local.
- The budget should be specially secured for and spent on building the community level remedial actions and protective mechanisms from floods, heatwaves, cyclones and heavy rainfalls. These funds are recommended to be spent on the training of the communities and vulnerable groups on these remedies along with the infrastructure in their localities and settlements.
- The programs and schemes made for relief and rehabilitation and compensation for the loss and damage should also be amended with the view to make landless SC and ST households eligible and also there should be a proper representation of the community in the loss and damage assessment and relief distribution process.
- Despite having the lowest carbon footprints, the marginalized and vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate impacts and must therefore be central to climate policy. All adaptation, and loss and damage measures should be explicitly guided by a 'reparative justice framework'. The energy transition must ensure that these communities do not bear any social, economic, or environmental costs, making equity and protection of the most affected a core priority.
- Off-grid solar systems for tribal and PVTG settlements should be treated as a temporary solution until grid connectivity is ensured. During this transition, schemes must fully cover maintenance and ensure local availability of spare parts, while training and paying community women and youth to manage repairs as a sustainable livelihood initiative.

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights is a forum launched in 1998, committed to the elimination of discrimination based on caste. A democratic secular platform led by Dalit women and men activists, with support and solidarity from movements and organizations, academics, individuals, people's organizations and institutions throughout the country who are committed to work to protect and promote human rights of Dalits. **Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA)** is a part of NCDHR and looks at the various economic rights of Dalits including education and entrepreneurship. It uses the Union and state Government budgets as the main vehicle to tracking schemes and entitlements of Dalits. It involves in advocacy with policy makers and executives in strengthening the existing policies and tracking it for accountability and transparency.

NCDHR-National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights-DAAA
www.ncdhr.org.in

For further information, please contact:

Adikanda Singh, Tel: +91-9205219784; Email: adikanda@ncdhr.org.in

