



Over 25.85 Lakh Scheduled Caste Students in Tamil Nadu Benefitted from Central Scholarship Schemes in Three Years

Government Strengthens Educational Access, Social Protection and Economic Empowerment Through Scholarships, PM-AJAY, PM-YASASVI and Other Welfare Initiatives

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The Central Government has reiterated its commitment to advancing educational opportunities, strengthening social protection and promoting economic empowerment for vulnerable communities in Tamil Nadu through a wide range of welfare programmes being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The initiatives cover Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Economically Backward Classes, Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, senior citizens, sanitation workers, transgender persons, persons affected by substance abuse and other marginalized groups, with a focus on inclusive development, skill enhancement and improved access to financial assistance.

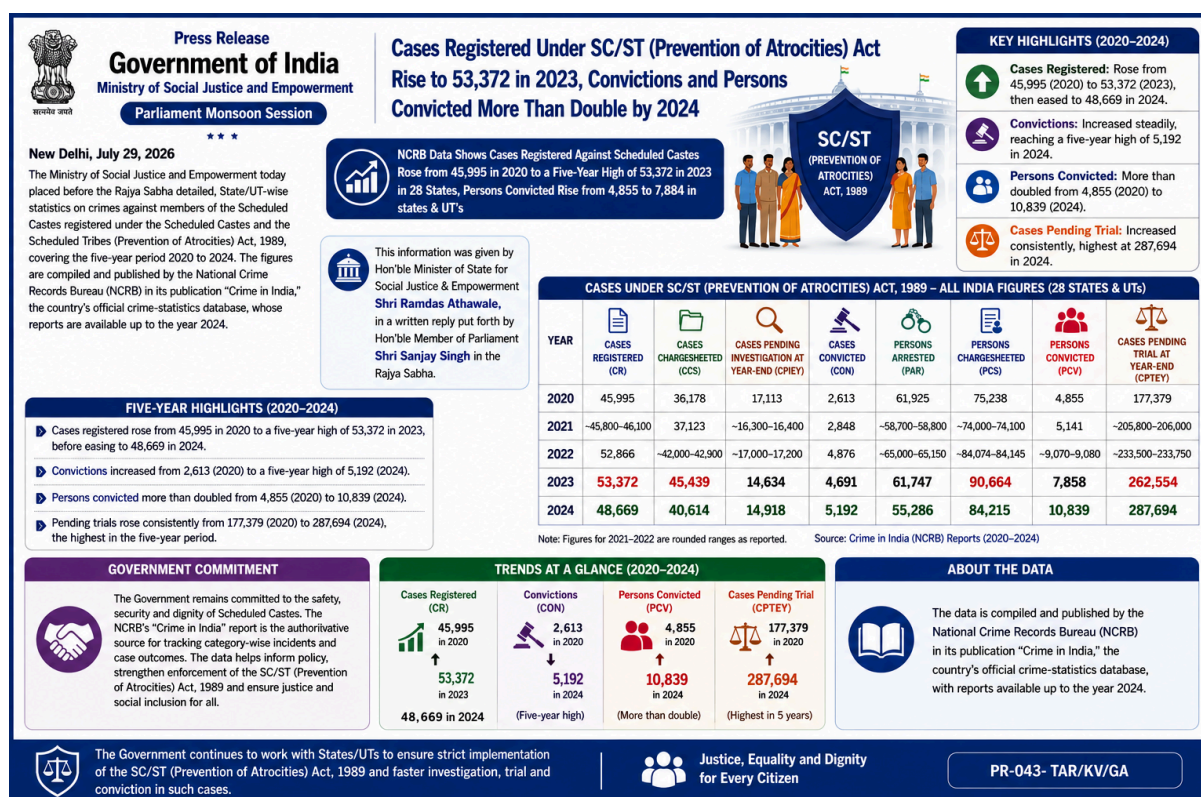
This information was given by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, **Shri Ramdas Athawale**, in a written reply to **Dr. M. Dhanapal** in Rajya Sabha.

The Government's flagship scholarship programmes have continued to provide substantial educational support to Scheduled Caste students in Tamil Nadu. Under the **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Others**, the number of beneficiaries increased from **3,35,642** during **2023-24** to **5,21,123** in **2024-25**, before rising further to **5,82,684** in **2025-26**. Correspondingly, the Central assistance increased from **₹70.56 crores** to **₹109.45 crores** and further to **₹121.49 crores** over the same period.

Similarly, under the **Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste Students**, the Government supported **9,34,793** students with Central assistance amounting to **₹1,032.09 crores** during **2023-24**. In **2024-25**, scholarships were provided to **6,43,761** students with financial assistance of **₹713.69 crores**. The number of beneficiaries increased substantially in **2025-26**, with **9,66,840** Scheduled Caste students receiving scholarships supported by **₹1,034.94 crores**. Collectively, the two scholarship schemes benefitted **more than 25.85 lakh Scheduled Caste students** in Tamil Nadu over the last three financial years, while Central assistance exceeded **₹3,080 crores**, reaffirming the Government's continued emphasis on ensuring equitable access to quality education for Scheduled Caste students.

The **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY)** has also played an important role in improving socio-economic infrastructure and livelihood opportunities for Scheduled Caste communities across Tamil Nadu. Under the **Adarsh Gram** component of the scheme, the State received

₹18,606.69 lakh during 2023-24, followed by ₹22,325.63 lakh during 2024-25, while ₹165.55 lakhs have been released so far during 2025-26. The financial support under the **Grants-in-Aid** component also witnessed sustained assistance, with releases amounting to ₹9,182.94 lakh in 2023-24, ₹9,674.36 lakh in 2024-25, and ₹11,962.81 lakh in 2025-26. Assistance was also extended for hostel infrastructure under the scheme to facilitate better educational opportunities for Scheduled Caste students.



The Government has also continued to prioritize the welfare of senior citizens in Tamil Nadu through dedicated financial assistance under the **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC)** and the **State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC)**. Under IPSrC, Central assistance of ₹15.63 crore was released during 2023-24, followed by ₹16.36 crore in 2024-25 and ₹15.78 crore in 2025-26, reflecting the Government's sustained commitment towards strengthening institutional care, health support and welfare services for senior citizens. Under SAPSrC, financial assistance amounted to ₹0.15 crore in 2023-24, while ₹1.43 crore was released during 2025-26 to support State-level initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of elderly citizens.

The **Prime Minister Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI)** has continued to expand educational opportunities for students belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) and Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs). Under the **Pre-Matric Scholarship** component, the Government released ₹40.47 crore during 2023-24, ₹23.63 crore during 2024-25, and ₹35.29 crore during 2025-26. The financial assistance under the **Post-Matric Scholarship** component stood at ₹135 crore in 2023-24, ₹119.37 crore in 2024-25, and ₹106.74 crore in 2025-26. The scheme also supported the construction of hostels for OBC boys and girls, with ₹5.25 crore, ₹1.30 crore, and ₹0.03 crore released over the last three financial years respectively.

The Government has also significantly strengthened support for meritorious students through the **Top Class Education** components of PM-YASASVI. The financial assistance for **Top Class Education in Schools** increased from ₹1.88 crore in 2023-24 to ₹11.51 crore in 2024-25, before rising substantially to ₹30.62 crore during 2025-26. Similarly, the assistance under the **Top Class Education in Colleges** component rose from ₹5.71 crore in 2023-24 to ₹14.79 crore in 2024-25, reaching ₹15.41 crore in 2025-26, reflecting the Government's continued efforts to promote access to quality education among socially and educationally disadvantaged communities.

The **National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)**, launched in 2023 to ensure the safety and dignity of sewer and septic tank workers, has also made notable progress in Tamil Nadu. According to the information placed before the Rajya Sabha, **6,891 sewer and septic tank workers** have been validated in the State, with an equal number of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits** distributed. The Government has also provided **37 safety devices** to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs), organised **98 workshops** on the prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks, and extended capital subsidy for mechanised cleaning equipment to **44 sanitation workers**. In addition, **34,854 waste pickers** have been validated, while **9,925 PPE kits** have been distributed among them to improve occupational safety and dignity.

The Central Government reiterated that the Government remains committed to ensuring that the benefits of education, skill development, social protection, rehabilitation and economic empowerment reach every eligible beneficiary across Tamil Nadu. Through sustained investments in scholarships, livelihood promotion, welfare programmes and inclusive development initiatives, the Ministry continues to work towards building an equitable society where vulnerable communities are empowered to participate fully in the nation's social and economic progress.

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