13. DALITS

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| **Highlights**   * Allocations under Statement 10 A, i.e. allocations for Welfare of Scheduled Castes have increased from Rs. 38,833 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 52,393 crore in 2017-18 (BE) * With the merger of Plan and Non-Plan heads of expenditure, there is lack of clarity regarding parameters for assessing allocations reported under Statement 10 A * Outcome based monitoring of Scheduled Caste Sub Plan would be carried out by the NITI Aayog * Allocations to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has increased from Rs. 6,566 crore in 2016-17 (BE) to Rs. 6,908 crore in 2017-18 (BE) * The lending target of *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana*, which gives priority to *Dalits* among other socially disadvantaged groups, has been doubled to Rs. 2.44 lakh crore in 2017-18 (BE). This was Rs. 1.22 lakh crore in 2016-17 (BE) |

While the overall objectives of the last two Five Year Plans (11th and 12th) focused on “inclusive growth”, at end of the 12th Five Year Plan, *Dalits* continue to face critical development deficits. They face persistent discrimination, social exclusion, limited access to basic services and unequal opportunities. While the Five Year Plans have resulted in, at best, a limited improvement in the status of *Dalits*, there are now additional concerns regarding the approach adopted to address their concerns.

Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) was introduced in 1979 to address the multiple development deficits confronting *Dalits*. It stipulates earmarking plan outlays for *Dalits* in proportion to their share in the total population of the country (which is 16.6 percent as per Census 2011). While the implementation of the SCSP has been marred with a number of concerns, it is nevertheless, an important strategy to ensure direct policy driven interventions for *Dalits* across sectors. However, the merger of Plan and Non-Plan heads of expenditure in Union Budget 2017-18 raises questions regarding how the strategy would be implemented now. At the same time, schemes for *Dalits* [under Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DSJE)] were identified as those schemes whose allocations would be ‘protected’ by the Union Government in restructuring of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). Given the backdrop, it is imperative to track the allocations for *Dalits*, both under SCSP as well as for DSJE from the Union Budgets.

The reporting in SCSP in Union Budget 2017-18 marks a departure from the earlier statement as: (i) the structure of the sub-plan has been replaced by a statement giving “Allocations for Welfare of Scheduled Castes”, (ii) allocations for SCSP are now earmarked from the total schemes’ allocations, segregated as Revenue and Capital expenditure, and (iii) the statement now appears as Statement 10 A, instead of Statement 21, till last year. The allocations earmarked under SCSP have increased by almost 36 percent from 2016-17 (BE) to 2017-18 (BE) (see figure 13.1).

**Figure 13.1: Budgetary Outlays for Dalits (Rs. crore)**

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget, various years

In this context, it is important to note that:

First, while Statement 10 A remains important from the perspective of ensuring budgetary outlays for *Dalits* across sectors, in absence of any reference to SCSP, there is no clarity on parameters for assessing the allocations reported by different ministries / departments in this statement. The main difference between the SCSP until the last budget and the Statement 10 A presented in this budget, lies in the fact that while SCSP provided a norms-based framework to assess allocations reported by various ministries, Statement 10 A does not do so. While the Budget Circular 2017-18 did indicate (i) using Narendra Jadhav Task Force recommendations for earmarking by ministries, and (ii) ensuring the allocations under schemes in SCSP this year are at least maintained at the levels earmarked in 2015-16 (BE) and 2016-17 (BE), how the reporting has actually happened remains unclear. Hence, it is thus important that new norms should be developed for reporting in SCSP by various ministries.

Secondly, the increase in allocations in Statement 10 A is not due to introduction of new schemes for *Dalits* in this budget. It is rather due to, (i) inclusion of certain schemes which were not reporting in SCSP earlier (e.g. *Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana* etc.) and (ii) inclusion of those schemes which were earlier reported under Non-Plan head and were hence not eligible for reporting under the SCSP, which included only Plan expenditure (e.g. Employees Pension Scheme, 1995, Interest Subsidy for Short term credit to farmers etc.), and (iii) inclusion of certain ministries, such as Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, which were earlier not reporting under SCSP.

Thirdly, analysis of sectoral composition of allocations under Statement 10 A reveals that just five ministries – Rural Development, Human Resource Development, Health and Family Welfare, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Social Justice and Empowerment - comprise over 73 percent of the total allocations (Figure 13.2). Of this, the nodal department for development of *Dalits*, DSJE comprises only 10 percent of the total allocation under Statement 10 A.

Fourthly, there has been an announcement that NITI Aayog (which had stated last year that it is not within its mandate to monitor SCSP) would undertake an outcome based monitoring of SCSP. In this regard, the role of the NITI Aayog as well as the DSJE needs to be spelt out more clearly, not just in ensuring outcome based monitoring but also in developing a revised framework of earmarking under SCSP.

**Figure 13.2 Ministry wise Allocations under Statement 10A in 2017-18 (BE)**

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget 2017-18

The allocations for DSJE have increased from 2016-17 (BE) to 2017-18 (BE); however, a comparison with previous years reveals that the increase has been marginal over the years (Figure 13.1). The Departmentally Related Standing Committee Report for Demand for Grants 2016-17 of DSJE highlights that in the last few years the budget allocations for the department have consistently remained below the amounts proposed by the Department to the Ministry of Finance. Further analysis also shows that the levels of fund utilisation for the department have been good; utilisation levels were around 96 percent in 2015-16[[1]](#footnote-1). Given that the department has been able to utilise the allocated funds well, the unmet demand for higher funds by DSJE, is a concern.

While the general trend of fund utilisation for department has been good, for certain schemes, such as Pre-Matric scholarship, *Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana*, Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers etc. fund utilisation has been a major issue (Table 13.1). For instance, the Departmentally Related Standing Committee Report on Demand for Grants 2016-17 for DSJE highlights that the implementation of Pre-Matric scholarship has been weak, with poor utilisation of funds due to low demand from the states for release of fund under this scheme. This is probably the reason why the Budget Estimates for the scheme have been reduced to Rs. 50 crore in 2017-18 (BE) from Rs. 550 crore in 2016-17 (BE). Similarly, the same report highlights how in 2015-16, allocations for Venture Capital Funds for SCs were reduced from Rs. 102 crore in 2015-16 (BE) to Rs. 0.01 crore at the RE stage due to non-receipt of Utilisation Certificates from IFCI Ltd.

Allocations for Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers remain low at less than Rs. 10 crore in 2017-18 (BE), which is a concern given the importance of this scheme in view of the enactment of the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill Act, 2013”. In this context the standing committee report also observes that while Census 2011 reports 26 lakh sanitary latrines in the country, with 7.94 lakh being serviced by humans, it is surprising that there hasn’t been any increase noted in number of manual scavengers in last one year. Thus, DSJE should prioritise identification of manual scavengers, without which the implementation of this would remain meaningless.

**Table 13.1: Budgetary Outlays for Major Schemes under DSJE (Rs. crore)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Major schemes** | **2012-13 A** | **2013-14 A** | **2014-15 A** | **2015-16 A** | **2016-17 BE** | **2016-17 RE** | **2017-18 BE** |
| Schemes for Educational Development of SCs\* | 2,649 | 2,816 | 2,670 | 3,046 | 3,647 | 3,615 | 3,863 |
| *Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana* | 0 | 0 | 30 | 196 | 90 | 50 | 40 |
| Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Rights Act 1995 and Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 | 97 | 128 | 147 | 119 | 150 | 228 | 300 |
| Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers | 20 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 5 |
| Special Central Assistance to SCSP | 872 | 790 | 700 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 |
| Interventions for Entrepreneurial Development of SCs\*\* | 0 | 0 | 662 | 170 | 255 | 249 | 243 |
| Other programmes\*\*\* | 41 | 57 | 117 | 163 | 187 | 188 | 196 |

*Notes:* The schemes have been clubbed together under broad heads as per the restructuring in the Union Budget 2016-17.

\*Schemes for Educational Development of SCs include the various scholarship schemes for SCs and for children of those engaged in unclean occupations as well as hostels for SC girls and boys.

\*\*Interventions for Entrepreneurial Development of SCs include: State Scheduled Castes Development Corporations, National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation, National Safai Karmacharis Finance and Development Corporation,

Venture Capital and Credit Guarantee Fund for Scheduled Castes, Investment in Public Sector Enterprises.

\*\*\*Other programmes include: Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Foundation, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre, Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial, Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for SCs, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Safai Karmacharis,

*Source:* Compiled by CBGA from Union Budget, various years.

The Union Budget 2017-18 does not present an encouraging picture for *Dalits*. While on one hand the allocations in Statement 10 A have increased from previous years, a departure from the approach of a sub-plan to a statement for welfare of Scheduled Castes indicates diluting the intent of this statement. At the same time, absence of a new framework to guide the reporting in Statement 10 A highlights lack of transparency in reporting by various ministries towards SCSP. At the same time, allocations for DSJE have been ‘protected’ from previous levels, without any significant increases. There is thus, a need to prioritise allocations for *Dalits,* across sectors through a revised SCSP, as well increase the allocations for the nodal department for *Dalits*, i.e. DSJE.

1. Departmentally related Standing Committee Report on Demand for Grants of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment 2016-17, Government of India [↑](#footnote-ref-1)