

RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF PEOPLE ENGAGED IN MANUAL SCAVENGING 2023-24



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About Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA) is a unit of the national campaign on Dalit Human rights and is working towards securing and strengthening the economic rights of the Dalit and Adivasis Community and believes strongly in 'bolstering the agency of the community. The main vehicle is access to public entitlements live livelihood schemes, education, entrepreneurship, and asset building through the constitutional provision of budgetary allocations. DAAA believes strongly in the inclusion and promotion of marginalized communities in the country's economy. DAAA makes strategic interventions in public policy, planning, budgeting, advocacy and research, and implementation and monitoring of the SCP TSP sub-plans. DAAA has worked extensively in the last 7 years to make scholarships a reality for students from rural and semi-urban areas and has managed to ensure scholarships reach at least one lac students. DAAA encourages, supports, and enables students to access post-matric scholarships and works on ensuring the effective implementation of the scheme.

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Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights



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RIGHT TO EDUCATION

of children of people engaged in manual scavenging
With a special focus on Union budget allocation for the
FY 2023-24



The constitution of India enshrined the Right to Education as a fundamental right with the 86th Constitutional amendment and was passed by parliament in the year 2002. Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan was started in the year 2001 to ensure the educational rights of children. The constitution has also provided a scheme and program for ensuring the rights of the marginalized communities of India through the enactment and implementation of various acts and programs in the Indian sub-continent.

It is crucial to understand that ensuring the rights and entitlements requires sufficient funding and active mechanisms to ensure the accessibility of these benefits by the people. Dalits constitute 16.6% of the total population of India. Marginalisation of Dalits, especially the children of the women and men engaged in manual scavenging need to be seen exclusively apart from the other marginalized communities of India. Dalit marginaliza-

tion is not only a case of poverty-driven marginalization but also caste-driven, culturally forced, and systemic marginalization. Even among the people below the poverty line who are non-Dalits, they can do away with socio-economic marginalization when their finances improve but for Dalits, the grip of the 'Caste tag' is much more powerful than strong finances. Though to some extent financial improvement may make their lives a little easier but does not save them from atrocities and violence caused due to Casteism.

This policy brief focuses on the current allocation under various important educational schemes & programs which are very crucial to promoting the educational rights of the children of the Dalit community in the country, as the allocations under these schemes reflect the intention and the priority of the government with regards to securing the Right to Education of the Dalit children.

In the last FY of 2022-23, under the schemes for the self-employment of the Manual Scavengers, a meagre allocation of Rs.70 Cr. and Rs.25 Cr. for National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation was done. In this Financial year of 2023-24, there is Zero allocation under the Schemes for rehabilitation of the manual scavengers-SRMS.

CHALLENGES STILL REMAIN THE SAME YET UNHEARD IN ACCESSING EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS, SCHEMES, AND PROGRAMS:

Challenges still remain the same from the ground up to the policy level.

With regard to the renaming of the Pre-Matric Scholarship scheme to the Children of those engaged in occupations involving cleaning and prone to health hazards” as “pre-matric scholarship for SC and others”, the Managing Director of National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Commission pointed that no application was received by the commission in these recent years for this scheme, therefore, renaming of the scheme was done. It is essential to acknowledge the fact that the reason for not receiving any applications from the children of the sanitation workers and the manual scavengers is not because this scheme is not needed but because there is a lack of information among the Dalit children about the existence of this schemes and the process to access the benefit of the schemes.

In Rural areas, children are still discriminated against in the classroom and other community spaces on the basis of caste. Due to constant harassment and insult, children are reluctant to claim their rights and entitlements which require their engagement with a service provider belonging to another caste than their own. Dalit students are continuously discriminated against in school by their classmates and teachers. Children belonging to the Valmiki community are forced to clean the school toilet, and sit and eat separately from the rest of the children in the school.

Children of the Scheduled caste community are still facing problems in accessing the national overseas scholarship because of the various clauses and the conditions recently added for accessing the scheme benefits. Many children abroad are facing problems and challenges in seeking the scholarship benefits and reimbursement that are applicable under the scheme which are forcing them to drop out of the scholarship benefits.

BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN OF THE DALIT COMMUNITY FOR FY 2023-24:

BUDGET ESTIMATE UNDER VARIOUS DEPT AND MINISTRY	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	Rs in Crore				
Department of Higher Education	3207	3210	3843	3889	4032
Ministry of Social Justice, and Em- powerment	6371.1	7154.33	7751.62	9508.01	
Department of School Education and Literacy	10257.92	10270	9420.68	10993.95	

Table 1: Budget allocation to Departments and ministries for Educational Development of SC, ST, and OBC children.

The table above shows the allocation at the union level to the various departments and ministries. It is seen that the allocation to the Department of School Education and Literacy for this financial year has increased by Rs.1,882.06 cr. and for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment the allocation for the current financial year increased by 652.93 cr. and for the Department of Higher Education increased by 143 cr. for the current financial year.



	Educational Schemes and allocation	FY 2018-19		FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21		FY 2021-22		FY 2022-23		BE FY 2023-24	
		BE	AE		BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE		
				BE=Budget Estimate, AR = Actual Expenditure								
		BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	AE	BE	BE	
				Rupees in Crore								
1	National Overseas Scholarship fo SCs			20	32.76	20	33.09	30	49.07	36	50	
2	Scholarship for College and University Students			39	39.65	15	20.31	23	22.08	30	0	
3	PM Reseach Fellowship			8.3	3.9	8.3	11.39	23	14.04	36	72	
4	National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme			73.64	67.77	75	70.34	63.5	35.47	66	61	
5	Scholarships for Higher Education for young achievers Schemes (SHREYAS) for SCs-Free coaching for SCs and OBCs							50	14.98	47	47	
1	PreMatric Scholarship to the children to those engaged in Occupation involving cleaning and prome to Health Hazards	5	3.12	5	29.4	25	26.81					
2	Pre-Matric Scholarship for SCs and others							725	570.4	500	500	

Table :2: Budget allocation under various educational Schemes.

The table above shows the positive flow of allocation under the National Overseas scholarship which is indeed one of the very important schemes for those aspiring for overseas education, though some of the conditions applied seem to be limiting children from availing of the scheme followed by the delayed reimbursement of the educational expenses incurred. The actual expenditure under the National Means cum merit scholarship scheme clearly shows a decrease in the allocation and expenditure. Rs. 73.64 cr. was the BE for the FY 2019-20 and AE was Rs.67.77 Cr, now for the current FY of 2023-24 the BE is Rs.61 Cr. which clearly shows the decrease in both estimation and the actual expenditure.

pre-matric scholarship to the children of those engaged in occupations involving cleaning and prone to health hazards scheme was renamed as a pre-matric scholarship for SCs and Others in the year 2021. Under this scheme also, there is a decrease in budget estimation and the Actual Expenditure. In the FY 2021- 23, with the renaming of this scheme, the BE was Rs.725 Cr. and AE was Rs570 Cr. And in this FY of 2023-24, the BE is Rs.500Cr. same as the previous financial year of 2022-23.

Some new changes and initiatives to encourage the education of the children of manual scavengers and the children belonging to the Dalit community are required. For instance, special provisions in terms of monetary allowance/stipend for the children of the manual scavengers and waste pickers apart from the regular scholarship under the pre-matric scholarship would be be. It is a known fact that the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the children of marginalized communities very harshly, forcing Dalit and other marginalized children to drop out of school. One of the reasons being the lack of access to the internet and smartphones to attend online classes which even forced few children to commit suicide. To prevent such disasters caused by the digital divide in the future, the government should promote not only smart classes in school but also provide such types of equipment such as laptops, smartphones, and internet access to all the children who are marginalized and fall below the poverty line with special emphasis on the children belonging to the Dalit and the Adivasi communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be proper clarification on the proportion of the budget for Component 1 and Component 2 as defined under the Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for Scheduled Castes & Others .
2. Increase the allocation under the education Schemes for the Scheduled Caste children and ensure the proper and timely disbursement of benefits so that children can access and reap the benefits on time. The Allowance under the Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for Scheduled Castes & Others should be increased at least up to Rs.12000/- per annum for day scholars and Rs.15000/- for the Hostellers which is currently Rs.3500/- for day scholars and Rs7000/-for the Hostellers (Component 1: Children belonging to Scheduled Caste) and Rs.8000/- (Component 2: children of the people engaged in Manual scavenging and children of those defined in Section 2 (I) (g) (d) of Manual Scavengers Act 2013 .
3. Conduct the nationwide identification of the people engaged in Manual Scavenging and those defined in Section 2(I), (g) (d) which was directed under the MS Act of 2013. Failure to conduct this survey nationwide automatically deprived children of their rights and entitlements, especially of their educational rights and other entitlements.
4. Special efforts to be taken to ensure that people are aware of the schemes and means of accessing scholarships should be widely disseminated.
5. Girl children should be given priority and protection to attend school and move on to higher education.

CONCLUSION

The right to free and compulsory elementary education is one of the core rights that every child in this world should have. Still, millions of children are deprived of this right and are heading toward a gloomy future. In India, there are children who are unable to go to school within their village not because they don't want to but because they are not allowed to enter, to sit with fellow children, to play and learn together just because of their caste. Caste robs one's dignity and integrity. It is to be acknowledged that the Right to Education and access to educational programs and schemes are not just 'ORDINARY' rights, it is a lot more than that in real life because it affects the upcoming generation as well. One educated Dalit person can make a difference in a family, or community, and inspire others to pursue education. Education has a ripple effect in society and can trickle up the movement to freedom and justice among the Dalits in the country. Education indeed is one of and most powerful tools to break the vicious cycle of injustice, inequality, and casteism to a large extent. For Dalit children who are always been yoked under poverty, discrimination, and injustice, educational schemes and programs are a support system to beat and break the shackles. Therefore, the implementation of effective and targeted schemes and sufficient allocations under these schemes are very important to bridge the gaps between the Dalits and the children of mainstream society. Apart from these, the Protection of children from caste-based discrimination through strict implementation of the POA act is crucial to safeguard the rights of children belonging to Dalit and Adivasi communities.

The recent direction issued by the Supreme Court to the center and the state with regards to the case – WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO: 583 OF 2003, Safai Karamchari Andolan & Ors. Versus Union of India & Ors. to conduct the nationwide survey, Creation and maintenance of Dashboards, formation and proper functioning of state-wise monitoring committees, and increase in the compensation amount of not less than 30 lakh rupees to the family of the deceased who died working in the sewer seems promising. If these things are implemented on an urgent basis and the stakeholders abide by the guidelines and direction given by the Supreme Court, thousands of the families forced into these menial jobs would benefit and can help them at least pursue other dignified occupations, the stringent legal action can help secure the safety at workplace and security of the payment and life of the person engaged in sanitation works.

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