

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment

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**Draft Speech for the Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Veerendra Kumar at the launch of the Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA) on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022.**

My greetings to all of you on the occasion of the Launch of the Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA), which has been formulated under an innovative idea to impart quality residential education in reputed CBSE based Private Schools to the meritorious but poor SC students, whose parents annual income is up to Rs. 2.5 Lakh only.

2. As you know that the mandate of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment is empowerment of the socially, educationally and economically marginalised sections of the society including Scheduled Castes. This Department has formulated many new schemes, policies and enacted laws for the welfare of its target group during the last 8 years. The scheme of SHRESHTA has been formulated for

empowerment of poor SC students, who cannot afford to take education in reputed Private Schools. Empowerment through education is most effective tool in growth of the country as it does not empower the person alone but its empower the entire family of such educated persons, resulting in empowering of the community and growth of the country.

3. The students from the Scheduled Caste communities, for long have been subjects to untouchability and inequality and were kept out of quality education, disadvantages carried forward for generations of lack of adequate education. The Governmental efforts to spread educational facilities without discrimination have worked well in achieving near universal access and removing of untouchability up to a good extent . However, the objective of providing access to quality education that provides a level playing field is still far from reality.

4. The scheme of SHRESHTA has been conceived to provide access to high quality residential education in Best Private Schools to the meritorious poor students from Scheduled Caste communities for persuasion of their academics from class 9<sup>th</sup> to class 12<sup>th</sup> and the entire cost of school fee and residential charges under the scheme shall be paid by the Department.

5. Every year, a specified number of meritorious SC students (Approx 3000) in States/UTs are selected through a transparent mechanism of a National Entrance Test for SHRESHTA (NETS), conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). Selected Students under the scheme are offered the best private residential schools across the country to pursue their academic further, as per their choice through e-Counselling process. Further, the Department has incorporate provisions in the scheme, to avoid any hardship to the selected students and also to facilitate the selected Schools that full payment a year shall be paid in one go with a simplest mode and minimum requirement of documentation, which truly defines the Government intention of "Minimum Government and Maximum Governance".

6. The Department has also made provisions in the scheme for a Bridge Course to the selected student, who may join such best Private Schools from the Schools of Rural Areas or from the Schools of Regional language Schools, to adapt in the new environment of the selected schools. The bridge course will be conducted outside-the-school-hours, after identifying the individual academic requirements, to ensure that SC students of the Scheme, can catch up with the rest of the students in the class. The

Department shall pay additional cost to the selected schools for conducting of Bridge Course to the Selected students under the scheme.

7. The students of the Scheme, after pass out of class 12<sup>th</sup>, may be connected to the other schemes of the Department such as Post Metric Scholarship Scheme or Top-Class Education Scheme to continue their further studies in IIMs/IITs/AIIMs/NITs/NIFTs/NIDs/ Indian Institute of Hotel Management, National Law Universities and other top Central Institutions, with adequate financial aid from the Government of India.

8. The Ministry of social Justice and Empowerment has also been implementing various schemes for providing education to the SC student such as ' POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME', under which scholarships are provided to SC students for Degree and Post Graduate courses, Other Professional courses leading to Degree, Diploma, Certificate and all post matriculation non degree courses etc. 'PRE-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME' for the SC students for their education at pre-matric level, 'BABU JAGJIVAN RAM CHHATRAWAS YOJNA' for construction of Hostels for SC students, SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION For YOUNG ACHIEVERS(SHREYAS) for pursuing higher education in India and

abroad and/ or obtaining employment in Gr "A" or Gr "B" service at Centre of States. Besides Ministry also support SC students under the scheme of 'FREE COACHING for SCs' , by providing coaching in good quality centres for economically disadvantageous SC students at free of cost and a monthly stipend of Rs. 4000/-pm is paid to the SC students.

9. Though the Government of India has taken sufficient measures to empowerment of SC community, still a lot is yet to be achieved to bring the SC community in the main Stream of the Society. This may be possible only through their empowerment in education and we should have give more attention for their empowerment through education. More Schemes like SHRESHTA, which is on innovative ideas, may be formulated and implemented across the country.

10. It is also an occasion for introspection by all sections of the society as to whether we have been successful in securing the legitimate place of SC community in the society and whether the SC community has been able to enjoy equal justice, economic independence and other aspects of meaningful life in comparison with their fellow citizens of other communities. This process of introspection is all the more relevant, considering the fact that the SC students are still facing abuse, violence and neglect etc. in the society. we are already in the 21<sup>st</sup> Centurary and

may ensure economic independence and social inclusion of the SC community in the society, which can be done on fastest way through education empowerment of the community, with the MOTO ' SABKA SAATH, SABKA VISWAS, SABKA VIKAS.

11. I congratulate the Ministry for the farsightedness shown in formulating such a good scheme for the welfare of economically weaker SC students and inviting the students to this momentous occasion, and the Schools which have sent their children here.

12. I extend my hearty felicitations to all the participants and officers of the Department, who are relentlessly working in the field of welfare of SC community.

Thank you.

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