

UNIT 25 – UPSC - Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Vulnerable groups are those groups of society which would be susceptible under any unfavourable situations such as where the adults are not capable to provide a satisfactory living for the household due to health issues like disability, illness, age or some other characteristic, and groups whose resource endowment is poor to provide sufficient income from any available source. In India, there are numerous socio-economic difficulties that members of particular groups experience which limits their access to health and healthcare. For government, it is not an easy task to identify the vulnerable groups. Besides there are multiple and complex factors of vulnerability with different layers and more often than once it cannot be analysed in isolation. There are several conspicuous factors on the basis of which individuals or members of groups are differentiated in India, i.e., structural factors, age, disability and discrimination that act as barriers to health and healthcare. The vulnerable groups that face impartiality include, Women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Children, Aged, Disabled, Poor migrants, People living with HIV/AIDS and Sexual Minorities. Sometimes, each group faces many obstacles due to their multiple individualities. For example, in a patriarchal civilisation, disabled women have to face double discrimination of being a women and being disabled.



There is caste system in India since ancient times and therefore sudras have been browbeaten for the ages. In earlier period, they were deprived of the right to education and thus were left suffering behind, socially and economically. Such people have been categorized into Scheduled Castes. Tribal communities, who never mixed with the main society, are similarly challenged and are categorized into Scheduled Tribes.

Backward Classes: The constitution of India does not define the term backward classes. It is up to the centre and the states to postulate the classes that belong to this group. However, it is assumed that classes that are not signified passably in the services of the state can be termed

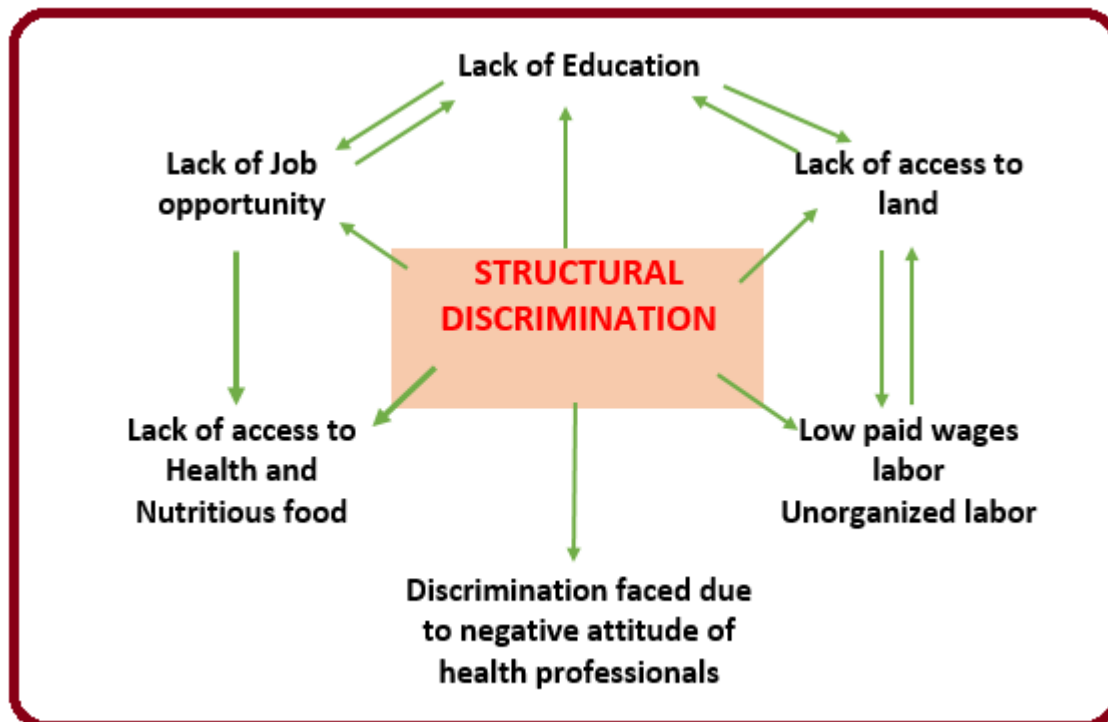
backward classes. Further, the President can, under Art. 340, can establish a commission to scrutinise the condition of socially and educationally backward classes. Structural standards are attached to the different relationships between the subordinate and the prevailing group in every society. The norms act as structural obstacles giving rise to various forms of disparity.

There are some structural Discrimination Faced by these vulnerable groups. In India, members of gender, caste, class, and ethnic identity experience structural discrimination that has adversely impacted on their health and access to healthcare. Women also face dual discrimination being members of specific caste, class or cultural group apart from experiencing gendered susceptibilities. Women have less control on the resources and on important decisions related to their lives. In India, early marriage and childbearing affects women's health unfavourably. About 28 per cent of girls in India, get married below the legal age and experience pregnancy (Reproductive And Child Health – District level Household Survey 2002-04, August 2006). These have serious consequences on the health of women. Reports indicated that maternal mortality is at rising trend in India. The average maternal mortality ratio at the national level is 540 deaths per 100,000 live births (National Family Health Survey-2, 2000). It varies between states and regions, i.e., rural-urban. In most cases the deaths occur from avoidable causes. Huge percentage of women are reported to have received no antenatal care. In India, institutional delivery is lowest among women from the lower economic class as against those from the higher class. It has been documented in reports that major proportion of the lower castes and Dalits are still dependent on business and upper class for their living. Dalits does not refer to a caste but suggests a group who are in a state of subjugation, social disability and who are helpless and poor. Earlier, they were called as 'untouchables' mainly due to their low jobs i.e., cobbler, scavenger, sweeper. In a caste-dominated country such as India, Dalits who comprises more than one-sixth of the Indian population, stand as a community whose human rights have been sternly dishonoured. Literacy rates among Dalits are very low, about 24 per cent. Their living conditions are very poor or have low access to resources and entitlements. In rural India, they are landless poor agricultural labourers attached to rich landowners from generations or poor casual labourers doing all kinds of available work.

In the metropolitan, they get low level job as wage labourers at several work sites, beggars, vendors, small service providers, domestic help, etc. They live in slums and other temporary shelters without any kind of social security. The members of these groups face systemic violence in the form of disavowal of access to land, good housing, education and employment. Structural discrimination against these groups occurs in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse which receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system. Physical separation of their settlements is common in the villages forcing them to live in the most unhygienic and inhabitable conditions. All these factors affect their health status, access to healthcare, and quality of health service received. There are high rates of undernourishment reported among the downgraded groups resulting in mortality, morbidity and anaemia. Access to and utilization of healthcare among the marginalized groups is influenced by their socio-economic status within the society.

It is observed that structural discrimination unswervingly obstructs equal access to health services by way of prohibiting. The undesirable attitude of the experts towards these groups also acts as an obstacle to receiving quality services from government. A large proportion of Dalit girls drop out of primary school in spite of reservations and academic aptitude, because of poverty,

humiliation, isolation or bullying by teachers and classmates and punishment for scoring good grades (National Commission Report for SC/ST, 2000). The scavenger community among the Dalits is susceptible to stress and diseases with reduced access to healthcare. The Scheduled Tribes like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Likewise the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes also face marginalization based on ethnicity. There is a desperate need for development of the weaker sections such as the SCs, STs, and OBCs. The SCs, STs and OBCs have been forced to remain as the Weaker Sections of India, and the women confined or oppressed to be the most and multiply exploited sections of the country, for many decades. This worst situation, cannot and should not continue anymore. There is a need for the Government to act to free and unshackle the weaker Sections, from the lethargies of oppression, marginalisation and backwardness. They have to be elevated to the levels of normal human-beings of the world.



Scheduled Castes/Tribes Welfare Schemes

NGOs

Schemes:

Scheme of Grant in Aid to Voluntary Organisations working for Scheduled Castes Ministry's

Schemes:

Central Sector Scheme of 'Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship' for Providing Scholarships to Scheduled Caste Students to pursue Programmes in Higher Education such as M.Phil and Ph.D (Effective from 01-04-2010)

Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme of Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)

Government of India have approved implementation of a new Centrally-sponsored Pilot Scheme called Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) from the financial year, 2009-10, for integrated development of 1,000 villages in the country, each with more than 50% Scheduled Castes (SC) population. PMAGY aims to achieve all-round, integrated development of selected villages.

Primarily, through convergent implementation of all relevant Central and State schemes in them, and By meeting needs which cannot be met through above then through provision of "gap-filling" funds for which central assistance to be provided Rs.10 lakh per village revised to Rs. 20 lakhs per village at an average w.e.f. Sep. 2011, with State Government also expected to make a suitable, preferably matching, contribution. State, District and Block wise abstract of villages selected under PMAGY (M Laxmikanth, 2014).

Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (Letter, Annexures, and National Allocation for 2009-10):

The scheme of construction of hostels is effective way to enable and encourage students belonging to scheduled castes to attain quality education. The scheme for construction of hostels for girls is in operation from 3rd Five Year Plan while for boys, the same was started from the year 1989-90. The object of the Scheme is to provide residential accommodation facilities to SC Boys and Girls studying in middle schools, higher secondary schools, colleges and Universities. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations and the Central & State Universities/institutions will be eligible for central assistance, both for new construction of hostel buildings and for renovation repair extension expansion of the existing hostel facilities while NGOs and deemed Universities in the private sector only for expansion of their existing hostel facilities.

Post-Matric Scholarship for SC Students

The Post Matric Scholarships enables huge number of Scheduled Caste students to obtain post-matric and higher level of education resulting in their overall educational and economic development. The Scheme offers for 100 per cent Central Assistance to the State Governments and UT Administrations over and above the respective committed liability of the State/UT. The committed liability of the North Eastern States have, however, been dispensed with.

Pre-Matric Scholarships for the Children of those Engaged in Unclean Occupations

The Government of India has implemented the Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship to children of those engaged in 'unclean' occupations since 1977-78. Under the scheme, 100% central assistance is provided to State Governments/UT Administrations from the Government of India for the total expenditure under the Scheme, over and above their respective Committed Liability to implement this Scheme. The object of the scheme is to provide financial support to children whose parents/guardian belongs to one of the following categories, to pursue Pre-matric education:

- i. Persons who are either presently engaged in manual scavenging or were so engaged up to or after 1.1.97 or the date on which "The Employment of manual scavengers and construction of Dry latrines (Prohibition) Act 1993" came into force in their State/UT, whichever is earlier;
- ii. Tanners
- iii. Flayers.

Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education for SC Students (Effective from June 2007):

The Scheme has an objective at recognizing and promoting quality education amongst students belonging to SCs, by providing full financial support. The scheme will cover SC students for pursuing studies beyond 12th class. The scheme will work in all institutions notified by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)

The Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) was announced in January, 2007. It has an objective of rehabilitating the remaining manual scavengers and their dependents in alternative occupations by March, 2009. Major aim of this scheme is to assist the manual scavengers, identified during various surveys, for their rehabilitation in alternative occupations (M.Laxmikanth, 2014).

Central Government has reviewed the SRMS for rehabilitation of all the manual scavengers identified under the provisions of the MS Act, 2013. The main features of the Scheme include one-time cash assistance, training with stipend and concessional loans with subsidy for taking up alternative occupations.

Centre sector scheme of National Overseas Scholarships for Scheduled Castes (SC):

It is a Central Scheme to offer financial assistance to meritorious students for pursuing higher studies in foreign university in specified fields of Master Level Courses, Ph.D and Post-Doctoral research programmes, in the field of Engineering, Management; Pure Sciences; Agricultural Science; Medicine Technology and Science. The Scheme was announced during the year 1954-55 and has since been revised from time to time. This was Non-Plan Scheme, which became a Plan Scheme from 2007-08.

Salient features of this scheme are as under:

1. Financial assistance is provided to 15 meritorious students (13 for ST and 2 for PTG) for pursuing higher studies abroad at the Masters level and Ph. D and Post-Doctoral research programmes in 35 specified disciplines of Engineering, Technology and Sciences.
2. The Scheme attempts at enhancing the employment avenues for ST candidates.
3. 100% Central Assistance is provided directly to the candidates.
4. The prescribed financial assistance is provided till completion of the course/ research or the following period, whichever is earlier:-
 - (a) Post Doctoral Research - 1&1/2 years (One and a half year)
 - (b) Ph.D. - 4 years (four years)
 - (c) Masters Degree -3 years (three years)

The extension of stay beyond prescribed period for levels of courses as mentioned above, may be considered without financial assistance of any kind except the air passage to return to India, on the recommendation of the competent authority in the educational institution/ university as well as the Indian Mission abroad.

Eligibility Criteria

The candidate should belong to Scheduled Tribe community.

1. The candidate should be First Class with 60% marks or equivalent grade in relevant degree for Master Degree, Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral Research.
2. The age of the candidate should be below 35 years.
3. Total income from all sources of the employed Candidates or his/her parents/guardian should not exceed Rs. 25000/- per month (excluding such allowances as are not treated as part of the total income for the purpose of income tax).
4. Not more than one child of the same parents/guardian is eligible.
5. Candidates who are in employment must forward their applications through their employer alongwith their NOC.

The finally selected candidates are required to obtain admission and join an accredited university/institution abroad within three years from the date of communication of selection.

Special Educational Development Programme for Scheduled Castes Girls belonging to low Literacy Levels:

Centre sector scheme of Up gradation of Merit of SC Students:

The Scheme of Up gradation of Merit of SC students provides for 100% central assistance to States/UTs for arranging remedial and special coaching for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students studying in class IX to XII. While remedial coaching aims at removing deficiencies in school subjects, special coaching is provided with a view to prepare students for competitive examinations for entry into professional courses like Engineering and Medical. The main objective of the scheme is to upgrade the merit of Scheduled Caste students by providing them with facilities for all round development through education in residential/non-residential schools. There will be no bar for any student to avail coaching for both the purposes (viz. Remedial and special).

It is planned to be done by:

- i. Removing their educational deficiencies.
- ii. Facilitating their entry into professional courses by upgrading their merit so that they can compete with other students for admission to higher education courses and for senior administrative and technical occupations.
- iii. Generating self-confidence and self-reliance in them. The States will pay adequate attention to maintenance of hostel buildings and other infrastructural facilities.

Salient features of the scheme are as under:

- i. The State Government/UT Administration selects certain schools in different Districts/towns with hostel facilities which show excellence in performance of students from class IX to XII.
- ii. The Ministry fixes the total number of awards for each State annually.
- iii. Coaching starts from class IX in the identified schools and continues till the awardees complete class XII.
- iv. Coaching is provided in languages, science, mathematics as well as special coaching for admission to professional courses like engineering and medicine.
- v. While selecting the ST students the aim is to include at least 30% girl students and 3% disabled students.

- vi. The scheme provides for 100% central assistance to the States/UT's

Centre sector Scheme of free Coaching for SC and OBC Students

Government has major concern for the empowerment of the weaker sections since independence. A scheme for providing free coaching to students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) was started during 6th Five Year Plan. Main intent of the Scheme is to provide coaching of good quality for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) candidates to enable them to appear in competitive examination and succeed in obtaining an appropriate job in Public/Private sector. The programme covers special coaching for:

- i. Group A and B examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and the various Railway Recruitment Boards (RRB);
- ii. Group A and B examinations conducted by the State Public Service Commissions;
- iii. Officers' Grade examinations conducted by Banks, Insurance Companies and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- iv. Finishing courses/job-oriented courses for employment in the private sector like IT, Bio-technology etc. in need of soft skill as well.

National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation (NSFDC)

Vision of this scheme is to Fight Poverty through Entrepreneurship. The National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation (NSFDC) was set up in 1989 as a "Company not for profit" under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013. National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation is an institution under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India for financing, facilitating and mobilizing funds for the economic empowerment of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes families living below Double the Poverty Line. It finances income generation schemes for the target group through the State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) nominated by respective State/UT Governments.

Major objective of this institution is the apex institution for financing, facilitating and mobilizing funds from other sources and promoting the economic development activities of the persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes living below double the poverty line.

Eligibility

Criteria:

The beneficiary should be from the Scheduled Caste Community. Annual family income of the beneficiary (ies) should not exceed Double the Poverty Line (DPL) income limit (presently ' 98,000/- p.a. for rural areas and ` 1,20,000/- p.a. for urban areas).

National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC)

It is totally government of India Undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (M/o SJ&E) which was set up on 24th January 1997 as a Company "Not for Profit" under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. NSKFDC is in operation since October, 1997, as an Apex Corporation for the all-round socio-economic upliftment of the Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers and their dependants throughout India, through various loan and non-loan based schemes. The Mission of NSKFDC is to empower the Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers and their dependents to break away from their traditional occupation, depressed social condition and poverty and leverage them to work their own way up the social and economic ladder with self-respect. Major objective of this scheme is as under:

1. To promote economic development activities of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents;
2. To promote self-employment ventures for the benefit and /or rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents.
3. To assist, through the State Scheduled Castes Development/finance corporation or any other Channelizing Agency designated by the State Government or Union Territory Administration and subject to the directions given by the Government from time to time, Safai Karamcharis and their dependents, either individually or in groups, by way of grants, subsidy, loans or advances for economically and financially viable income generating schemes and projects.
4. To grant concessional finance to Safai Karamcharis and their Dependents in collaboration with the Ministries or Departments of GOI or Governments of States/UTs under relevant programmes;
5. To extend loans to students from the community of Safai Karamcharis for pursuing professional or technical education.
6. To promote training, quality control, technology upgradation, and common facility centers for carrying out sanitation works.
7. To assist state level organizations dealing with development of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents by way of providing financial assistance and in obtaining commercial funding or by way of re-financing.
8. To work as an apex institution for coordinating and monitoring the work of all Corporations, Boards set up by the State Governments/Union Territories administrations for assisting Safai Karamcharis and their dependents for their economic development.
9. To help in furthering the policies and programs of the Government for socioeconomic development of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents.
10. To help in the up-gradation of technical and entrepreneurial skills of persons belonging to the community of Safai Karamcharis or their dependants for proper and efficient management of production and service units set up by them.
11. To support self-employed individuals or groups of individuals from the community of Safai Karamcharis including their dependants or units/cooperatives set up by them in procurement of raw materials or other outputs and marketing of finished goods or services.

Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs)

The main purposes of SCDCs include identification of eligible SC families and motivating them to undertake economic development schemes, sponsoring the schemes to financial institutions for credit support, providing financial assistance in the form of the margin money at a low rate of interest, providing subsidy out of the funds made available to the States under the Scheme of Special Central Assistance to Special Component Plan of the States to reduce the repayment liability and providing necessary tie up with other poverty alleviation programmes. For aiding loans to Scheduled Castes, the SCDCs tie up with the local banks, National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC). Thus the SCDCs are playing an important role in providing credit and missing inputs by way of margin money loans and subsidy to the target group. The SCDCs finance

the employment oriented schemes covering diverse areas of economic activities which inter-alia include (i) agriculture and allied activities including minor irrigation (ii) small scale industry (iii) transport (iv) trade and service sector.

Supporting Project of All India Nature of SCs

Under the scheme, financial aid is provided to reputed Social Science Research Agencies and Universities which have necessary expertise and are willing to undertake the purposeful studies and hold seminars and workshops preferably on the socio-economic programmes undertaken by Government bodies. This scheme is run through NGOs (Gyan Publishing House, 2005).

National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis was established on 12th August, 1994 for a period of 3 years under the provision of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993 to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of Safai Karamcharis. The National Commission has, inter alia, been empowered to investigate specific grievances as well as matters relating to implementation of programmes and scheme for welfare of Safai Karamcharis. The Commission is required to be consulted on all major policy matters affecting Safai Karamcharis.

Vital schemes/programme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are as under
Special Central Assistance & Grants Under Article 275(1) Of The Constitution:

Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India offers such sums as Parliament may by law provide shall be charged on the consolidated Fund of India in each year as grants-in-aid of the revenues of such States as Parliament may determine to be in need of assistance, and different sums may be fixed for different States: Provided that there shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of India as grants-in-aid of the revenues of a State such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that State to meet the costs of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of the Government of India for the purpose of promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes in that State or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of the areas of that State".

This is a Central Sector Scheme and 100% grants are provided to the States. This scheme is effective in States such as Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh , Assam , Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan , Sikkim , Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal having Scheduled Tribe Population..

Salient features of this scheme are as under:
The grants are provided to the States on the basis of ST population percentage in the State to the total tribal population of the Country.
The funds are released to the State Governments against specific projects for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and strengthening of administration of tribal areas from the year 2000- 2001. A part of funds are also utilised to establish Eklavya Model residential Schools to provide quality education to ST students from class VI to XII

Scheme of Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (Ptgs)

Central government has provided special assistance to States/UTs to supplement their efforts in tribal development through Tribal Sub-Plan. This assistance is basically meant for family-oriented income-generating schemes in the sectors of agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, forests, education, cooperatives, fisheries, village and small scale industries and for minimum needs programme. Based on pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy, declining or stagnant populations, 75 tribal communities in 17 States and 1 Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Island, have been identified and categorized as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Considering the vulnerability of these groups, a Central Sector Scheme was introduced in the year 1998-99 for the all-round development of PTGs.

The scheme is very flexible, and include housing, infrastructure development, education, health, land distribution/development, agriculture development, cattle development, social security, insurance, etc. During 2007-08, comprehensive long term “Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) Plans” for PTGs have been formulated for Eleventh Plan period through baseline surveys conducted by respective State Governments/Union territory. These Plans envisage a synergy between efforts of State Governments and non-governmental organizations.

Tribal Research Institutes

Fourteen Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) have been established by Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. These Institutes are engaged in providing planning inputs to the State Governments, conducting research and evaluation studies, collection of data, codification of customary law and conduct of training, seminars and workshops. Some of these Institutes are also having museums exhibiting tribal artefacts.

Girls / Boys Hostels for STs: Girls/ boys scheme was started in third five year plan with the aim of providing residential facilities to tribal girls in the pursuit of education. Central assistance of 50% cost of construction to the states, cent percent to the Union territories is provided under the scheme. The boys hostel scheme was started in 1989- 90 under the same pattern as the girls hostel (Y. K. Singh, 2008).

Ashram Schools In Tribal Sub-Plan Areas: This centrally sponsored scheme was started in 1990-91 to provide central assistance to state and union territories on 50% and 100 % basis (Y. K. Singh, 2008).

Vocational Trainig Centres in Tribal Areas: This scheme under the central sector introduced in 1992-93 with the aim of developing the skills of the tribal youth in order to get employment or self-employment opportunities. The scheme envisages setting up of vocational training centres (Y. K. Singh, 2008). The proposals by NGOs are required to be routed through State Government and the recommendation of the “State Committee for Supporting Voluntary Efforts” constituted under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/Secretary, Tribal Welfare/Development Department of the State/UT are mandatory. The recommendation of State Committee is valid for that financial year in which it is made.

Grants-in-aid to State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations and others

Major objective of the scheme is to augment the reach of welfare schemes of Government and fill the gaps in service deficient tribal areas, in the sectors such as education, health, drinking water,

agro-horticultural productivity, social security net etc. through the efforts of voluntary organizations (VOs)/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and to provide an environment for socio-economic upliftment and overall development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Any other innovative activity having direct impact on the socio-economic development or livelihood generation of STs may also be considered through voluntary efforts.

Under this scheme 90% grant is provided by the ministry and 10% cost is required to be borne by the non-governmental organizations from their own resources, except in Scheduled Areas where the Government bears 100% cost. The scheme provides a list of categories of projects viz. residential school, non-residential schools, 10 or more bedded hospitals, mobile dispensaries, computer training centres, etc., which could be covered under the scheme, and also prescribes fixed financial norms. The scheme does not provide any construction cost.

The Proposals by NGOs are required to be routed through State Government and the recommendation of the "State Committee for Supporting Voluntary Efforts" constituted under the chairmanship of principal Secretary/Secretary, Tribal Welfare/Development Department of the State/UT are mandatory. The recommendation of State Committee is valid for that financial year in which it is made.

Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students

The objective of the scheme is to offer financial assistance to students belonging to Scheduled Tribes pursuing Post-Matriculation recognized courses in recognized institutions. The scheme covers professional, technical as well as non-professional and non-technical courses at various levels and the scheme also includes correspondence courses including distance and continuing education. The scheme is implemented by the State Government and UT Administrations, which receive 100% Central Assistance over and above the committed liability which is required to be borne by them from their own budgetary provisions. The committed liability is equal to the expenditure reached in the last year of the Plan period. Accordingly, the expenditure incurred in the last year of the Xth plan period, i.e. 2006-2007, has become the committed liability of State/UTs, which is required to be borne by them during each year of the 11th Five Year Plan period. The requirement of committed liability of North Eastern State has been dispensed with from 1997-98. The Scheme is in operation since 1944-45.

Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF)

This Scheme was introduced in the year 2005-06. Under the Scheme, fellowship is provided to ST students for pursuing higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph. D. The maximum duration of a fellowship is 5 years. Every year 667 fellowships are to be provided to ST students. The scheme is being implemented by University Grant Commission (UGC) on behalf of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Any ST student who has passed post-graduation from a UGC recognized University can apply under the scheme.

Major schemes for Women which are also vulnerable section of society

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY): The Government of India in the Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing a centrally sponsored scheme namely, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), Conditional Maternity Benefit (CMB) for pregnant and lactating women to enhance their health and nutrition status to better enabling environment by providing cash incentives to pregnant and nursing mothers. It is being implemented using the

platform of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. The scheme was introduced in October 2010 on pilot basis now operational in 53 selected districts.

Eligibility Criteria:

Any woman is entitled to receive the benefit of the Woman must fulfil 4 criteria:

1. Pregnant women
2. Not less than 19 years old
3. This is her first or second live birth
4. She or her husband does not work in Government / Public Sector Undertaking (Central and State)

AWWs and AWHs may also avail the benefit under the Scheme if they are not receiving paid maternity benefits from the Government and fulfill the above-mentioned 4 criteria

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)

This scheme is also called SABLA. It is a centrally sponsored scheme, implemented through the State Governments/UTs with 100% financial assistance from the Central Government for all inputs, except nutrition provision for which Government of India will share up to the extent of 50% of the financial norms or the actual expenditure incurred, whichever is less. A combined package of services is to be provided to Adolescent Girls that would be as follows:

- i. Nutrition provision
- ii. Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation
- iii. Health check-up and Referral services
- iv. Nutrition & Health Education (NHE)
- v. Counselling/Guidance on family welfare, ARSH, child care practices and home management
- vi. Life Skill Education and accessing public services
- vii. Vocational training for girls aged 16 and above under National Skill Development Program (NSDP)

The objectives of the scheme are as under:

- i. Enable self-development and empowerment of AGs.
- ii. Improve their nutrition and health status.
- iii. Spread awareness among them about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH), and family and child care.
- iv. Upgrade their home-based skills, life skills and vocational skills.
- v. Mainstream out-of-school AGs into formal/non formal-education.
- vi. Inform and guide them about existing public services, such as PHC, CHC, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, etc.

There are two major components under the Scheme that include Nutrition Component and Non Nutrition Component.

- I) Nutrition Component: Take Home Ration or Hot Cooked Meal
 11-14 years: Out of school girls
 14 -18 years: both out of school and in school girls
- II) Non Nutrition Component
 .For Out of school Adolescent Girls: (2 – 3 times a week)
- a) 11-18 years
 - IFA supplementation,
 - Health check-up and Referral services,
 - Nutrition & Health Education (NHE),
 - Counselling / Guidance on family welfare, ARSH, child care practices
 - Life Skill Education and accessing public services
- b) 16-18Years
 - Vocational training under National Skill Development Program
 . For In school Adolescent Girls: (twice a month – average)
- c) 11-18 years
 - Nutrition & Health Education (NHE)

Swadhar Yojna

Swadhar Scheme was introduced in 2001-02 with the identification of need for a project based approach to address the requirements of women in difficult circumstances. Major objective of the scheme is to comprehensively rehabilitate widows, victims of trafficking, victims of natural calamities, mentally challenged and destitute women. The scheme offers for support like food and shelter, counselling, medical facilities and vocational training to women. The scheme also envisages setting up help-lines for women in distress. In the latest Union Budget, it was proposed to merge Swadhar scheme with Short Stay Homes and renamed as Swadhar Greh. No. of Swadhar Homes to be converted into Swadhar Greh depends on receipt of requisite information from State Governments.

STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women) (20th October 2005):

The Ministry has administered 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme' since 1986-87 as a 'Central Sector Scheme'. The major objective of STEP Scheme is to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs. The Scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above across the country. The grant under the Scheme is given to an institution/ organisation including NGOs directly and not the States/ UTs. The assistance under STEP Scheme is available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to the Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the work place such as spoken English, Gems & Jewellery, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality.

Stree Shakti Puraskaar Yojna

Stree Shakti Puraskar is institutes in the name of eminent women in Indian history (Ajit Kumar Sinha, 2008). It is a series of India's national nobilities conferred on individual women for their excellent accomplishment. The award is given in six categories, by the Ministry of Women and

Child Development, Government of India. It recognises the spirit of courage of a woman in difficult circumstances, who has established this spirit of courage in her personal or professional life. The award also recognises the pioneering contribution of an individual in empowering women and raising women's issues. This scheme was instituted in 1991, the award is conferred by the President of India on the occasion of International Women's Day, 8 March every year at New Delhi. Major objectives of this scheme are as under:

1. To strengthen the process of economic development of rural women and create a conducive environment for social change.
2. To form one lakh Self Help Women Groups based on thrift and credit principles which builds self-reliance and enable women to have greater access to control over resources.
3. To create self confidence in rural women by involving them in income generating activities thereby contributing to poverty alleviation.
4. To provide opportunities to the members of the groups to avail the benefits of other departmental schemes by converging the services of various departments and lending institutions to ensure women's access to credit financing.

Short Stay Home for Women and Girls (SSH)

The Government of India initiated a programme in 1969 in the Central Sector known as the Short Stay Homes for Women & Girls to shield and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family glitches mental tensions, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes. The services extended in these Homes include medical care; case work services; occupational therapy; education cum vocational training and recreational facilities.

The need for providing Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls has been due to the changing pattern of life, rapid urbanization and industrialization and the resulting migration from rural to urban areas. The breakup of social institutions like the joint family, contributes considerably in creating problems of adjustment for women and young girls. Cases of marital conflict and emotional disturbance occur. This effort is made to help the women to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time. These Short Stay Homes have been established by voluntary organizations.

UJJAWALA

A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Eligibility Criteria: Women and children who are vulnerable to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and women and children who are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Advantages are as under: It prevents trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilisation and involvement of local communities, awareness generation programmes, generate public discourse through workshops/seminars and such events, and any other innovative activity. Scheme facilitates rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in a safe custody.

It provides rehabilitation services, both immediate and long-term, to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, including counselling, legal aid and guidance and vocational training. It also facilitate reintegration of the victims into the

family and society at large. Scheme enables repatriation of cross-border victims to their country of origin.

General Grant-in-Aid Scheme in the field of Women and Child Development

Vulnerability of children and aged

Children and the ageing population face different types of vulnerability. Mortality and morbidity among children are caused by poverty, their sex and caste position in society. All these have consequences on their nutrition intake, access to healthcare, environment and education. These factors directly impacts food security, education of parents and their access to correct health information and access to health care amenities. Undernourishment and chronic hunger are the important causes of death among children from poor families. Diarrhoea, acute respiratory diseases, malaria and measles are some of the main causes of death among children, most of which are either preventable or treatable with low-cost interventions. Tetanus in newborns remain a problem in at least five states: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Assam (UNICEF, India).

The vulnerability among the ageing population is not only due to illness and disability, but also due to their economic dependency upon their partners, children and other younger family members. Vulnerability among the elderly also depends on their living arrangement since the elderly are less capable of taking care of themselves compared to younger persons and need the care and support of others in several aspects. The significance of the living arrangement among the elderly becomes evident when seen in the context of their level of economic dependence. Lack of economic dependence has an impact on their access to food, clothing and healthcare. Among the basic needs of the aged people, medicine features are the highest unmet need. Healthcare of the elderly is a major concern for the society as ageing is often accompanied by multiple illnesses and physical ailments. One out of two elderly in India suffers from at least one chronic disease which requires life-long medications. Providing healthcare to elderly is a burden for especially poor households.

Among the aged, the widows, poor and disabled constitute those who are more underprivileged. Widows face structural disadvantages related with gender and marital status. There is striking gender differential that exists in the ownership of property and assets and in the participation of their management. At all India level, aged women like those in other age groups suffer from lack of ownership of property and financial assets and participation in their management compared to aged men in both urban and rural India.

Street Children and Orphans

Street children are also vulnerable group of society that needs greater attention from the government. There are groups for whom the street more than their family has become their real home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults. Human Rights closely watch and estimated that approximately 18 million children live or work on the streets of India. Majority of these children are involved in crime, prostitution, gang related violence and drug trafficking.

In India, approximately 26% of the Indian population lives below the poverty line and 72 % live in rural areas. Even though the percentage of the Indian population infected with HIV/AIDS is low, it has the second largest number of people infected with HIV/AIDS in the world, the first being South Africa. Despite the many recorded gains in the recent past, issues such as gender inequity, poverty, illiteracy and the lack of basic infrastructure hinder in HIV/ AIDS prevention and treatment programs in India. The impact of the AIDS crisis has not begun to fully emerge in India and AIDS related orphaning has not been recognized. Yet, it is assessed that India has the largest number of AIDS orphans of any country and this number is expected to double in coming years. It is projected that 14% of the 4.2 million HIV/AIDS cases are children below the age of 14. In a study conducted by the ILO found that children of infected parents are heavily discriminated, 35% were denied basic amenities and 17% were forced to take up petty jobs to augment their income.

Child labour in India is a complex problem and is deep-seated in poverty. Census 1991 data suggests that there are 11.28 million working children in India. Conservative estimates state that around 300, 000 children in India are engaged in commercial sex. Child prostitution is socially acceptable in some sections of Indian society through the practice of Devadasi. Young girls from socially deprived communities are given to the 'gods' and they become a religious prostitute. Devadasi is banned by the Prohibition of Dedication Act of 1982. This system is predominant in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. More than 50 % of the devadasis become prostitutes: of which approximately 40 per cent join the sex trade in urban brothels and the rest are involved in prostitution in their respective villages. According to the National Commission on Women, 250,000 women have been devoted as Devadasis in Maharashtra-Karnataka border.

Schemes for Vulnerable Children

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS): The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is a governmental program implemented by the Government of India to help secure the safety of children, with a special emphasis on children in need of care and protection, juveniles in conflict or contact with the law and other vulnerable children. Main objective of this scheme is to create a central structure to provide oversight and standardization for pre-existing and evolving child protection schemes in India. Proposed in 2006 and implemented in 2009, the ICPS is administered at the state level by state child protection committees and societies and at the district level by district child protection societies, among other institutions. Basically, ICPS is based on the ideologies of 'protection of child rights' and 'best interests of the child' and aims to institutionalize services for emergency outreach, family and community based care, counselling and support. ICPS sensitizes functionaries in the system towards child protection, and raise public awareness. It seeks to put in place both preventive and curative mechanisms for a child needing protection from exploitation, harassment, and health hazards. The model adopts government-civil society partnership to ensure child protection and create a safe and healthy environment for the children of India.

National Awards for Child Welfare: In order to boost the voluntary sector, the Government of India, in 1979, introduced a scheme of giving 'National Award for Child welfare' to deserving institutions and individuals for their outstanding performance in the field of child development and welfare, this scheme was started, with a view to give recognition to such voluntary action.

National Child Awards for Exceptional Achievements: The National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement was introduced in 1996 and is presented by the Department of Women & Child Development, government of India to children between ages 4 to 15 with exceptional capabilities. The awards are generally presented on 14 November, Children's Day, usually by the President of India in Durbar Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

Rajiv Gandhi Manav Seva Award For Service To Children: To boost voluntary action, the Government of India has been instituted an Award to honour individuals who makes outstanding contribution towards service for children. **Balika Samridhhi Yojana (BSY):** The Balika Samridhhi Yojana introduced in 1997 is an important initiative of the government to raise the status of the girl child. The aim of scheme is changing the negative attitude of families and communities towards the girl child, to increase enrolment and retention of girls in schools, to raise the marriage age of girls and to create income opportunities and activities. A series of incentives are incorporated into the Yojana, such as a gift of Rs. 500/- to the mother on delivery of a baby girl and the condition of an annual scholarship for the girl child education. In 1999-2000 the scheme was modified to benefit the girl child. Hence now the girl child can receive: A post birth grant amount of Rs. 500/- She will be eligible for annual scholarships for education according to class.

Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY):

The Kishori Yojana, financed by Government of India is being conducted in 70 Child Development projects of the State. Kishori Shakti Yojana under the domain of ICDS has an objective to empower adolescent girls and their holistic development by improving their self-perception and creating opportunities for realizing their full potential through Balika Mandals. The scheme principally aims at breaking the intergenerational life cycle of nutritional & gender disadvantage and providing a supportive environment for self-development.

Major objective are as under:

- i. To provide the required literacy and numeric skills through the non-formal stream of education.
- ii. To stimulate a desire for more social exposure and knowledge and to help them improve their decision making capabilities.
- iii. To improve the nutritional, health and development status of adolescent girls, promote awareness on health, hygiene, nutrition and family care.
- iv. To link them to opportunities for learning life skills, to train and equip the adolescent girls to improve/upgrade home based and vocational skills.
- v. To help them gain a better understanding of their social environment and take initiatives to become productive members of the society.

Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG)

The Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls was launched in 2002-03 to fulfil nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Under this scheme, 6 kg of food-grains were given to under nourished adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers according to their weight. It was primarily started as a pilot project in 51 districts of the country and was taken up again in 2003-04. It was stopped for a year in 2004-05 but taken on as a full project, in 2005-06, to be implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The scheme was started in 51 backward districts and was restricted to only undernourished adolescent girls. The

scheme continues on a pilot project basis. The funding is done by the central government to the state government in the form of 100% grants. The food is meant to be provided through the public distribution system for no cost to the families identified in this scheme. The scheme targets girl children between the ages of 11 -19 who are less than 35 kgs.

Early Childhood Education for 3-6 Age Group Children Under the Programme of Universalisation of Elementary Education: That Early Childhood Education has immense importance for overall growth of the child. The main objectives of educational development according to sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, is "to ensure essential minimum education to all children up to the age of 14 years within the next 10 years. The main tasks during the Sixth Plan for Elementary Education are as under.

- I. To achieve additional enrolment of 180 lakhs of children in classes I-VIII.
- II. To ensure drastic reduction in the drop-out rates.

Scheme for welfare of Working Children in need of Care and Protection:

The intent of the Scheme for Working Children in Need of Care and Protection is to offer working children with essential educational services such as non-formal education, and vocational training. The training must aim at entering or re-entering children in the mainstream formal education system in cases where they have never attended school and where children have discontinued school. The programme aims at averting and stopping the exploitation of working children and safeguarding their right to education.

Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA)

The aim of CARA is to guarantee that every orphan, destitute and surrendered child has an affectionate and caring family. It currently comes under the purview of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. CARA was formed in 1990 under the Ministry of Welfare. Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment conferred onto CARA the responsibility of upholding the Hague Convention on Protection of Children & Cooperation in respect of Inter-country Adoption of 1993. It became an autonomous body in 1999 by registering it under the Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. After the passing of the Juvenile Justice Act 2000 and its amendment in 2006, CARA was transferred to the MWCD. In India a child can be placed with a family under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956, Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 and Juvenile Justice Act, 2000.

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme For the Children of Working Mothers

This scheme is developed for the need of working women. It has been recognized that with growing employment opportunities for women and the rising need to supplement household income, more and more women are entering in the job market. Creche and Day Care Services are required by working mothers as well as women belonging to poor families, who require support and relief for childcare as they struggle to cope with burden of activities, within and outside the home. The Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme was refurbished in 2006. The present scheme will provide assistance to NGOs for running crèches for infants (0-6 years) and would provide assistance to ensure sleeping facilities, healthcare, supplementary nutrition, immunisation, etc. for running a creche for 25 infants for eight hours.

Major Schemes for Aged Population

1. National social Assistance program Scheme: The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from 15th August, 1995 represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of the Directive Principles in Article 41 and 42 of the Constitution. It presents a National Policy for Social Assistance benefit to poor households in the case of old age, death of primary bread-winner and maternity. This programme is being implemented in rural areas as well as urban areas. NSAP signifies a significant step towards the fulfilment of the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution of India which command upon the State to undertake within its means a number of welfare measures.

The Programme has three components, namely The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Government of India that offers financial support to the old people, widows and persons with disabilities in the form of social pension.

2. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS): This scheme is 100% funded by the Central Government. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) is a component of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP). Under National Family Benefit Scheme, Central Assistance is given in the form of lump sum family benefit for households below the poverty line on the death of the primary breadwinner in the bereaved family. The amount of benefit is Rs.10000/- in case of death of primary breadwinner due to natural or accidental causes. The family benefit is paid to such surviving member of the household of the deceased who, after local inquiry is determined to be the head of the household. There is some eligibility criteria. The assistance is available on fulfilling the following conditions:

1. The primary breadwinner shall be a member whose earnings contribute substantially to the household income.
2. The death of such primary breadwinner occurs while he or she is more than 18 years and less than 65 years of age.
3. The bereaved family qualifies as one below the poverty line according to the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India.

3. National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)

The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) was announced in 2001 to deliver nutrition support to pregnant women. Under this scheme, pregnant women living below the poverty line are given a one-time payment of Rs. 500, 8–12 weeks prior to delivery. In the year 2005, the government of India launched the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) to provide cash incentives for women choosing to have institutional deliveries. NMBS was merged into Janani Suraksha Yojana in the same year; however, with Supreme Court's intervention, the benefits under the NMBS were retained, irrespective of the place of delivery (International Labour Office, 1999).

Guidelines for National Old Age Pension Scheme

- i. The age of the applicant (male or female) shall be 65 years or higher.
- ii. The amount of the old age pension will be Rs. 75/- per month for purpose of claiming Central.
- iii. The applicant must be a destitute in the sense of having little or no regular means of subsistence from his/her own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources. In order to determine destitution, the criteria, if any currently

in force in the state/UT govt. may also be followed. The Govt. of India reserve the right to review these criteria and suggest appropriate revised criteria..

- iv. The ceiling on the total number of old age pension for purpose of claiming Central assistance is specified by Govt. of India.
- v. Village, Panchayat and relevant authorities shall report for every case of death of pensioners immediately after its occurrence to the appropriate sanctioning authority.

Other Senior Citizens Pensions

The National Policy on Older Persons was declared by the Government of India in the year 1999. It was a step in the right direction in enactment of the UN General Assembly Resolution 47/5 to observe 1999 as International Year of Older Persons and in keeping with the assurances to older persons contained in the Constitution. The welfare of senior citizens is mandated in the Constitution of India under Article 41. "The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to public assistance in cases of old age". The Right to Equality is guaranteed by the Constitution as a fundamental right. Social security is the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments. The policy and plans were put in place by central and state governments for the welfare of older persons. The state governments issued their policies and programmes for the welfare of older persons.

These Schemes were partially modified in 1998 based on the suggestions received from various corners and also on the basis of the feedback received from the State Governments.

Vulnerability Due To Migration: Migrants and their disavowal of rights have to be understood from the existing contradictions within and across nations from skilled and voluntary migrants at one end of the gamut to the poor and unskilled migrant population on the other end intended to be excluded from the fabric of the host nation/areas. For the latter, the intersection of human rights and migration is a negative one, with bad experiences throughout the migratory 'life cycle', in areas of origin, journey or transit and destination. The connection of health and human rights becomes even more complex when irregular or illegal migration clashes with the interest of the area of destination. India has huge number of international migrants. Adjacent countries are the main sources of origin of the international migrants to India with the bulk of these migrants coming from Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan and Nepal. But these are migrants who have entered the country lawfully. There are many who enter the country illegally. Those are the one who are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by employers, migration agents, corrupt bureaucrats and criminal cliques. In many situations, migrants do not know what rights they are entitled to and still less how to claim them, hence the cases of abuse go unrecorded. Another area where exploitation is widespread is forced labour which takes place in the illicit underground economy and hence tends to escape national statistics. Illegal migrants often live on the margins of society, trying to avoid contact with authorities and have little or no legal access to prevention and healthcare services. They face higher risks of exposure to dangerous working conditions. Internal migration of poor labourers has also been on the rise in India. This population is at high risk for diseases and faces reduced access to health services.

Among the migrants who are vulnerable, the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) deserve mention. Internal displacement arises out of ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts, political reasons, development projects, natural disaster etc. The Internally Displaced People are vulnerable to health risks and access to treatment. The emotional stress of displacement and the toll that this takes does have a great impact on physical as well as mental health. Many mental health problems

are reported among Internally Displaced People. Stress disorder leads to cardio-vascular stress, psycho-trauma, endocrine stress, musculo-skeletal stress, stress-belly (ulcers etc) and cranial stress (tension headaches and migraines). Migrants suffer greater vulnerability due to reduced economic choices and lack of social support in the new area of destination. Women and children in an asymmetrical situation are doubly vulnerable owing to their lack of proper legal status and high risk of sexual exploitation and suffer from poor antenatal care coverage, prevalence of anemia, prevalence of reproductive tract infections experience high incidences of violence.

To summarize, in the Constitution of India, the three supports of human rights are the right to equality including the prohibition of discrimination in any form, the six vital freedoms of citizens (including the right to speech and expression) and the right to life guaranteed to all persons. These rights have been documented to be unchallengeable, unalterable and part of the basic structure of the Constitution which cannot be abrogated. India's Supreme Court has understood the right to life as including the right to live with self-respect, right to health, education, human environment, speedy trial and privacy. The focus of governmental activity has to increase the delivery of services through grass-roots local self-governance institutions, particularly in rural areas. India has taken good initiative for the empowerment of women by reserving one-third of all seats for women in urban and local self-government, bringing over one million women at the grassroots level into political decision making. India has assured human rights to all people in India including the defence of minorities.

India has protected their right to practice and preserve their religious and cultural beliefs as a part of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights. Jurisdictional and executive measures have been taken for the effective implementation of protections provided under the Constitution for the protection of the interests of vulnerable sections. India's constitution is taking care of the need to empower the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and is fully dedicated to resolve issues of any discrimination against them at every level. The Constitution of India eradicated "untouchability" and prohibits its practice in any form. There are also explicit and elaborate legal and administrative provisions to address caste-based discrimination in the nation. India specified that at independence, after the departure of the colonizers, all the people, including its tribal people, were considered as native to India. This position has been elucidated on various occasions, including while extending India's support to the acceptance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.