

Special schemes  
for the  
Eradication of  
Untouchability

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# Special Schemes for the Eradication of Untouchability



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## **SPECIAL SCHEMES FOR THE ERADICATION OF UNTOUCHABILITY**

Untouchability has no place in a democratic state and is a blot on society. The stigma of untouchability continues to attach to a large section of the Backward Classes, viz., the Scheduled Castes known in common parlance as Harijans. This is sought to be removed by Bombay Government by making it an offence. Legislation, however, cannot by itself completely eradicate the evil. It calls for a reorientation of outlook and shedding of prejudices on part of the Caste Hindus. Government has, therefore, sanctioned special schemes to help in the eradication of untouchability. These schemes are meant to accelerate the process and it is essential that the propaganda workers should understand and explain them to the people in the proper spirit. A gist of these schemes is, therefore, given in the following pages:—

### **1. Preparation of a story film in 35 m.m. on the eradication of untouchability and copies thereof in the three regional languages**

Mass enlightenment on the problem of eradication of untouchability is necessary for effective tackling of the problem. Visual aids are considered to be one of the most effective methods of propaganda for the purpose. The story film on the eradication of untouchability is being utilised as a medium for carrying on propaganda in rural areas where untouchability is observed to a greater extent. An amount of Rs. 49,725 is proposed to be spent during the current year as the total estimated cost of preparation of the story film and copies thereof in three regional languages, viz., Marathi, Kannad and Gujarati. The scheme applies to the whole of the Bombay State and it is executed by the Director of Publicity, Bombay.

### **2. Prizes to villages which show outstanding work in the removal of untouchability**

With a view to create a healthy competition among the villages in the work of removal of untouchability and to create in them a real interest in that work a scheme to award prizes to villages has been sanctioned. There are two prizes under this scheme. First prize is of Rs. 1,000 and the second one is of Rs. 500. These prizes are to be awarded in each district except Greater Bombay and Dangs. The total cost of the scheme for the whole State is Rs. 29,000 per annum. For the purpose of selection of villages for awarding prizes, it is laid down that the population of the village should normally exceed 500 and that there should be at least 10 families of Scheduled

Castes residing in it. Cities and towns which are the Headquarters of the district or where Borough Municipalities or Municipal Corporations are established are not considered eligible for these prizes.

In judging the comparative merits of the work done in different villages for the eradication of untouchability, the following points are generally considered:—

(1) Whether Harijans are allowed free access to all public and private temples and wells of the village.

(2) Whether all the villagers co-operate in keeping the Harijan localities clean.

(3) Whether the people in the village are keen in the removal of untouchability.

(4) Whether the mutual relations between the Harijans and non-Harijans in the village are cordial.

(5) Whether there are appreciable number of persons who are prepared to rear up Harijan children in their own homes and whether the Caste Hindus invite the Harijans to their homes for meals and social functions.

(6) The occasions in which the Harijans and non-Harijans have freely mixed and inter-dined in different functions including Social Melas, if held in the villages.

The amount of the prize awarded to any village or villages in the district is to be utilised for public benefit of all the villagers which is likely to redound to the benefit of Harijans, such as:—

(1) Sinking a well for the common use of the villagers if drinking water facilities in the village are inadequate. The well should as far as possible be close to the Harijan locality. The prize amount should be treated as a part of the popular contribution payable by the villagers for such work.

(2) Construction of an approach road to the village.

(3) Construction of a school building in the village. Here also the prize money should be treated as a part of the popular contribution payable by the villagers towards the school building.

(4) Improvement of sanitation of the village, i.e., construction of public latrines, gutters, etc.

(5) Construction of a common tank for storing water for the use of the village cattle.

(6) Construction of a common ghat on the river or nalla, if the village is situated on the bank of a river.

(7) Arranging common dinners, tea parties, entertainment programmes like Kirtans or Bhajans and lectures of reputed persons on untouchability during the celebrations of the Harijan

Day. The Collectors are authorised to select any other work which would be most advantageous to the villagers particularly to Harijans.

The amount of the prize is paid to the following authorities according to the nature of work:—

(1) The District Local Board, if the prize money is to be utilised for digging of a well or for construction of an approach road.

(2) The District Building Committee, if the amount is to be utilised for construction of a school building.

(3) The Village Panchayat, if the amount is to be utilised for improvement of sanitation of the village, construction of public latrines, gutters, etc., and for construction of ghat on the river or nalla.

(4) The Mamlatdar, if the amount is to be spent for the common dinner, tea parties, entertainment programmes, Kirtans, Bhajans and lectures.

(5) Any social organisation commanding the confidence of the whole village, if the amount is to be spent on any object which does not fall within the scope of any of the authorities mentioned above.

The prize money is to be kept in safe custody until it is required for immediate use. It should be drawn from Government treasury as the work progresses. It should not unnecessarily be retained in private hands.

### **3. Award of prizes to the best drama on the removal of untouchability**

There is very little literature on the subject of untouchability. Dramas which propagate ideas in the society are very few on this subject. If dramas on the removal of social evils are encouraged they will help the eradication of untouchability. Hence Government has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 3,000 for the award of three prizes of Rs. 1,000 each for the best dramas in the three regional languages—Marathi, Kannad and Gujarati—which will depict the evil effects of untouchability and suggest suitable remedies for complete removal. The scheme applies to the whole of Bombay State. The dramas are to be judged by special committees appointed for the purpose.

### **4. Grants to Voluntary Agencies for holding Social Melas**

Social Melas of Caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes, if organised, will create healthy atmosphere and will help the Caste Hindus to shed their prejudices against the Harijans. These Melas will act as an example to orthodox Hindus and thus help in the removal of social disabilities of the Scheduled Castes. Hence the Voluntary

Agencies are encouraged to hold social Melas in rural areas. The total grant provided under this scheme is to the extent of Rs. 26,000. The scheme applies to the selected districts in the Bombay State where untouchability exists to a great extent. The Director of Backward Class Welfare is to fix the places for the purpose. The Voluntary Agencies should arrange public entertainment, light refreshment, dramas on the removal of untouchability and public lectures, etc. The Director of Backward Class Welfare, Bombay State, Poona, may be consulted, if any information is required.

#### **5. Organisation of instructive and entertainment programmes through Ballad singers and Kirtankars**

Propaganda in the rural areas can be effectively carried through entertainment programmes like ballad singing and Kirtans or Bhajans. The villagers being religious minded attend Kirtans or Bhajans in large numbers, whenever persons of repute visit villages. The scheme is, therefore, intended to encourage the Kirtankars and ballad singers to carry on propaganda for the removal of untouchability. Under this scheme, the Kalakars are paid actual expenses of their travelling and suitable remuneration. An amount of Rs. 1,000 for each district has been sanctioned for this scheme. It applies to the whole of the Bombay State, except Greater Bombay and Dangs. The Director of Backward Class Welfare is the executive authority for this scheme.

#### **6. Establishment of Sanskar Kendras for Harijans**

With a view to create healthy environment which provides opportunities to the children of Scheduled Caste communities to mix with each other and develop a sense of responsibility and co-operation, Government has launched a scheme for the opening of Sanskar Kendras. The Kendras are expected to provide for the following facilities in particular :—

- (i) furtherance of general knowledge in the community,
- (ii) development of local leadership,
- (iii) organisation of co-operative life,
- (iv) organisation of projects for improvement of healthy hygiene and sanitation.

It is proposed to start 19 Sanskar Kendras during 1954-55, through Voluntary Agencies. An amount of Rs. 57,708 has been sanctioned for this scheme. The scheme is executed by the Director of Education.

#### **7. Opening of Balwadis for Harijan children**

Nine Balwadis are proposed to be started through Voluntary Agencies under this scheme to teach Scheduled Caste children of tender age the habits of cleanliness and ultimately to achieve their assimilation with other caste Hindu children. An amount of Rs. 25,500 has been

provided for this scheme. It applies to the whole of the State except Greater Bombay and Dangs. The scheme is executed by the Director of Backward Class Welfare, Bombay State, Poona.

#### **8. Appointment of propagandists by Voluntary Agencies on grant-in-aid basis**

Intensive propaganda through official and non-official agencies in rural areas is considered to be absolutely essential to bring home to the Caste Hindus the evils of untouchability effectively and to induce them to shed their age-long prejudices and traditions. Hence the Voluntary Agencies are encouraged to appoint special propagandists for the purpose on payment of grant-in-aid. Sixty such propagandists are sanctioned under this scheme. An amount of Rs. 43,250 has been provided for the purpose of grant in aid. It extends to the whole of Bombay State, except Dangs District. The propagandists are appointed by recognised Voluntary Agencies.

#### **9. Appointment of high level propagandists**

There are a few selfless social workers who have devoted their lives for the welfare of humanity as a whole. They, however, do not work on behalf of any agency but pursue their mission for the welfare of the down-trodden people, especially the Harijans. Such high level social workers should be persuaded to carry on the propaganda for the eradication of untouchability. An amount of Rs. 4,320 has been provided for meeting the travelling expenses of such high level propagandists. The scheme applies to the whole of Bombay State except Greater Bombay.

#### **10. Payment of grants to Voluntary Agencies on account of Honoraria and T. A. to their Sanchalaks**

With a view to encourage the Voluntary Agencies to appoint one Sanchalak to supervise and guide the work of the propagandists, they are paid grant-in-aid on the honorarium and T. A. of the Sanchalaks at Rs. 150 per month and Rs. 70 per month respectively. An amount of Rs. 19,780 has been provided under this scheme. It extends to the whole of Bombay State.

#### **11. Encouragement grants to Caste Hindu families for bringing up Scheduled Caste children**

One of the effective measures for the removal of untouchability is to encourage Caste Hindu families to bring up Scheduled Caste children along with their own. The scheme is executed as an experimental measure. The Caste Hindus will be paid actual cost of bringing up Scheduled Caste children up to a maximum of Rs. 20 per month per child as an encouragement grant. An amount of Rs. 5,000 has been provided under this scheme. It extends to the whole of Bombay State and is administered by the Director of Backward Class Welfare.



### 12. Gratuitous relief to Harijans for meeting their emergent needs

Scheduled Caste persons are economically extremely poor. They find it difficult to rehabilitate in life if they sustain losses on account of accidental fire, flood or such other natural calamities. Besides, due to stigma of untouchability, they find it difficult to obtain the day-to-day necessities of life. An amount of Rs. 10,000 has been kept at the disposal of the Director of Backward Class Welfare, Bombay State, Poona, in order to enable Scheduled Caste persons to overcome such unforeseen difficulties and to help them to rehabilitate in life. The scheme also aims at meeting emergent grievances of Scheduled Castes such as want of drinking water facilities, provision of clothes to poor Harijan children attending Primary Schools. The scheme extends to the whole of Bombay State. For any further information the Director of Backward Class Welfare, Bombay State, Poona, may be consulted.

### 13. Organisation of training camps (Shibirs) for propagandists

In order to enable the propagandists appointed by Voluntary Agencies under scheme No. 8 above, to carry on their work effectively and efficiently, short term training classes for giving them a thorough grounding in their work are proposed. An amount of Rs. 6,500 has been provided under this scheme. It extends to the whole of Bombay State except Dangs District. The Director of Backward Class Welfare, Bombay State, Poona, may be referred to for any further information.

### 14. Observance of Sixth Harijan Day

In order to give further impetus to the movement for the eradication of untouchability, one Sunday in the Gandhi Jayanti Week is observed throughout the State of Bombay as the Harijan Day. The programme for the Day is usually as under:—

#### *Morning—*

(a) Prabhat Pheries to move through important streets of the City, town or village, to end with flag salutation ceremony;

(b) Saffai, tree planting, road making, etc., in the Harijan Quarters, of the City, town or village;

(c) Drawing water in common from public taps, tanks, ponds, wells, or other sources of water supply, especially in quarters predominantly inhabited by the Harijans in the City, town or village;

#### *Evening—*

(d) Holding public meetings to explain the significance of the Day and the provisions of the various Acts passed by Government

for the uplift of Harijans, viz., the Bombay Harijan (Removal of Social Disabilities) Act, 1946, the Bombay Harijan Temple Entry Act, 1947, and in places where the Devdasis system is prevalent, the Bombay Devdasis Protection Act, 1934;

(e) Common tea programme, wherever possible, the expenditure being met from private contributions;

Night—

(f) Common Bhajan programmes in important local temples.

The above programme except items (c) and (d) is subject to modifications to suit local conditions.

The Collectors of Districts, except the Collectors of Greater Bombay and Dangs, are authorised to incur expenditure on tea, prasad, remuneration to Bhajan parties, etc., at least up to Rs. 1,000 per District. Of the total expenditure on the entire programme expenditure up to Rs. 500 for each District is borne by Government, the balance being met by popular contributions.

### **NEW SCHEMES SENT TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR THE SPEEDY ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ERADICATION OF UNTOUCHABILITY**

In addition to the above schemes, the Government of Bombay has submitted supplementary schemes for sanction of the Government of India. Some of these additional schemes only aim at adding to the previous schemes while others are new schemes.

#### **1. Display of advertisements in local newspapers**

In addition to the normal publicity to the various measures for the eradication of untouchability, a concentrated drive could be carried on, as a follow-up through the advertisements in selected newspapers to focus the attention of the public on the subject. For this purpose an amount of Rs 6,000 has been proposed to be provided.

#### **2. Display of cinema slides in theatres**

Exhibition of slides depicting evil effect of untouchability is considered to be effective in carrying on the propaganda against the evil of untouchability. An amount of Rs. 12,000 has been estimated for this purpose and the Central Government has been requested to sanction the same. The scheme applies to the whole of Bombay State except Dangs district.

#### **3. Preparation of film strips in 35 m.m. on the eradication of untouchability**

Visual aids are considered to be one of the effective ways of carrying on propaganda for eradication of untouchability. It is proposed to exhibit film strips in High Schools and Colleges. For this purpose, an amount of Rs 2,000 has been proposed to be spent.

#### **4. Preparation of pamphlets and posters in the three regional languages viz. Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada**

To educate public opinion against the evils of untouchability and to create a general awakening among the Scheduled Castes, pamphlets and posters in bold type stressing the importance and necessity of removal of untouchability and giving quotations from great men and sacred books are considered to be effective if distributed in rural areas. An amount of Rs. 10,000 is proposed to be spent for this purpose. The scheme applies to the whole of Bombay State.

#### **5. Installation of radio sets in Scheduled Caste localities**

Eleven radio sets are proposed to be installed in Scheduled Caste localities in the Bombay State to carry on intensive propaganda regarding the beneficent measures undertaken by Government for their benefit. An amount of Rs. 4,000 has been proposed for this purpose.

#### **6. Repairs to public wells in Harijan localities**

Drinking water facilities in Scheduled Caste localities, especially in the rural areas, are extremely unsatisfactory. It is not considered desirable to dig separate wells for Harijans as such a step is likely to perpetuate untouchability, which is to be abolished as speedily as possible. Under this scheme it is desired to improve the common water supply facilities in or near Harijan localities as well as to induce the caste Hindus to avail themselves of the water facilities in and near about Harijan localities and thus to give impetus to the eradication of untouchability. An amount of Rs. 20,000 has been asked for from the Central Government. The scheme applies to the whole of the Bombay State, except Greater Bombay and Dangs districts. The scheme will be executed by the Collectors of the districts concerned.

#### **7. Organisation of social education classes in Scheduled Caste localities**

Illiteracy is rampant among the Harijan adults. It will not be possible to eradicate untouchability which has been in vogue since times immemorial by mere propaganda however intensive or extensive it may be. To achieve the object in view it is necessary to make Harijans literate so that they will be conscious of their rights and will exercise them boldly in defiance of the opposition likely to be met by them from the caste Hindus. It is therefore proposed to intensify social education drive in Scheduled Caste localities. An amount of Rs. 14,000 has been proposed to be provided for this scheme. The scheme applies to the whole of Bombay State except Dangs district. The scheme is implemented by the Director of Education, Bombay State. Poona.

### **8. Encouragement to cosmopolitan hostels**

Untouchability can be effectively eradicated if the Harijan and non-Harijan children stay together during the period of their education. This can best be achieved in mixed hostels where Harijan and non-Harijan pupils can stay together, dine together and freely mix with each other. The scheme proposes to encourage the managements of Backward Class Hostels to admit non-Backward Class pupils and non-Backward Class Hostels to admit Scheduled Caste pupils. An amount of Rs. 1,00,000 has been proposed for this scheme. The scheme will be implemented by the Backward Class Department.

### **9. Subsidies to hotels, restaurants, lodging and boarding houses etc. opened by Harijans in Caste Hindu localities**

At present the Caste Hindus are somewhat reluctant to eat food served by Harijans. Harijans, therefore, find it very difficult to open or maintain hotels, restaurants, etc., because they do not get sufficient number of patrons. One of the ways in which untouchability can best be eradicated is to encourage Harijans to open decent hotels, restaurants, etc., in Caste Hindu localities by the grant of subsidies. An amount of Rs. 15,000 is to be provided for this purpose from the Central Government grant.

From the schemes already sanctioned and proposed to be sanctioned it will be seen that every attempt is being made by Government to tackle the problem of removal of untouchability. The executing machinery and the Voluntary Agencies working for the cause should strive hard to achieve the object.