

Minorities: National

The government is rolling out targeted welfare schemes for minority communities, focusing on economically weaker and disadvantaged groups to ensure their socio-economic empowerment. These initiatives aim to promote education, skill development, and livelihood opportunities for inclusive growth.

Minority Communities in India

Legal Definition & Recognition

Determined by the Central Government under the National Commission for Minorities Act (NCMA), 1992. As per the current notification, six communities are recognised as minorities:

1. Muslims
2. Sikhs
3. Christians
4. Buddhists
5. Parsis (Zoroastrians)
6. Jains

Key Welfare Schemes for Minority Communities

1. Educational Empowerment

Scholarships & Financial Aid

1. Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme – for students from Class 1 to 10 belonging to minority communities.
2. Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme – for students from Class 11 to Ph.D. level.
3. Merit-cum-Means Based Scholarship Scheme – targeted at professional and technical courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Objectives

Promote access to quality education. Reduce dropout rates among economically weaker sections of minority communities. Encourage higher education, especially in technical and professional fields.

2. Skill Development & Livelihood

PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan)

Enhancing skills of artisans, craftsmen, and traditional workers from minority communities. Training in modern tools, marketing skills, and digital literacy to preserve heritage crafts and improve livelihoods.

Loan & Financial Assistance

Implemented via the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC). Provides concessional loans for

1. Self-employment ventures.
2. Small business expansion.
3. Education-related expenses (study in India and abroad).

3. Infrastructure Development

PMJVK (Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram)

Objective

Develop infrastructure in minority-concentrated areas to promote inclusive growth.

Key Sectors Covered

1. Education (schools, hostels, coaching centres).
2. Health (hospitals, health centres).

3. Skill training centres.
4. Drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

1. Legal Provision

Under Section 9(d) of the NCMA, 1992, the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) is empowered to receive and address complaints from minority individuals.

2. Coordination Role

The NCM liaises with relevant ministries, state governments, and agencies to ensure timely grievance resolution.

Constitutional Provisions for Minorities

1. Article 29 – Protection of Interests of Minorities

Right for any section of citizens to conserve their distinct language, script, or culture. Prohibits denial of admission into state-funded educational institutions on grounds of religion, race, caste, or language.

2. Article 30 – Right of Minorities to Establish Educational Institutions

Minorities have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Ensures state aid is not denied to such institutions solely because they are minority-managed.

3. Article 350-B – Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities

Added by the 7th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1956. Appointed by the President of India to investigate safeguards for linguistic minorities and report to the President.

Institutions for Minority Welfare & Rights Protection

1. Ministry of Minority Affairs

Established in 2006 (carved out from Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment). Role includes Nodal ministry for policy formulation, planning, coordination, and implementation of development and welfare programs for religious minority communities.

2. National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

Established under National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. It's a Statutory body. Mandated by Safeguard rights, investigate grievances, advise the government on minority-related policies, and review constitutional and legal safeguards.

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