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AGENDA NOTE FOR THE MEETING OF NODAL OFFICERS OF HOME AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS OF STATES/UTs TO REVIEW THE WORKING OF PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, 1955 AND THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND THE SCHEDULED TRIBES (PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES) ACT, 1989.

This meeting has been called to review the working of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Discussions will also be held to streamline the procedure and obviate delays in receipt of information/ material for Annual Reports on the working of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, 1955

The Constitution has abolished practice of untouchability under Article 17 and its practice in any form has been forbidden. Within five years of adoption of Constitution, the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 was enacted by the Parliament. In order to enlarge the scope and to make it more stringent, the Act was thoroughly revised in November 1976 and renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. This Act extends to the whole of India. The rules were also framed under the Act in the year 1977. The offences under the Act were made cognizable as well as non compoundable. The Act made it mandatory for the States to take specific measures as per section 15A (2) of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, Such measures include following: -

- ❖ The provision of adequate facilities, including legal aid, to the persons subjected to any disability arising out of "Untouchability" to enable them to avail themselves of such rights;
- ❖ The appointment of officers for initiating or exercising supervision over prosecution for the contravention of the provisions of this Act;
- ❖ The setting up of Special Courts for the trial of offences under this Act.
- ❖ The setting up of Committees at such appropriate levels as the State Governments may think fit to assist the State Government in formulating or implementing such measures;