

9. Financial implications

If and when, it is decided to make the specification of Scheduled Castes religion-neutral, it would have financial implications, in as much as the number of beneficiaries under various SC related Schemes would go up, notably under the following:-

- i) Post-Matric Scholarship for SCs; and
- ii) Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Caste Sub-plan (SCA to SCSP).

At this stage, however, the number of additional beneficiaries, in view of para 4 above, and consequential financial implications, thereof, cannot be estimated.

10. Inter Ministerial consultation

This note has been circulated to the Ministries of Home Affairs; Minority Affairs; Tribal Affairs; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Human Resource Development (Department of Higher Education); Finance (Deptt. of Expenditure); External Affairs and Law & Justice. However, due to urgency of the matter, it is being placed before the CCPA without getting the Ministries' comments and examining them. The Ministries have been requested to immediately furnish their views in the matter to this Ministry.

11. Decision of CCPA

Decision of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) is solicited on the stand to be taken by the Government in the petitions filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court mentioned in para 3 above. Consequent upon decision of the CCPA, affidavit would be filed in the Supreme Court.

- 12. The Implementation Schedule is at Appendix – I, p.13.**