

# PERFORMANCE AUDIT

## **CHAPTER II**

### **SCHEДУED CASTES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

#### **Implementation of educational development schemes for Scheduled Caste students**

##### ***Highlights***

*A Performance Audit was conducted to assess whether the implementation of Educational Development Schemes for SC students by the Scheduled Castes Development Department during the period 2010-15 was effective. It tried to determine whether the objective of bringing SC students on par with non-SC students paid dividends and whether the funds earmarked were utilised effectively. The Performance Audit revealed deficiencies in payment of allowances, provision of facilities, infrastructure of hostels, commencement of Paramedical courses, etc. affecting the education of SC students.*

**Only five out of the 27 nursery schools in test checked districts recorded the minimum required strength of 25 while in the remaining nursery schools, the average student strength ranged between nine and 23. Deficiencies like lack of water, electric connections, etc., were noticed.**

*(Paragraph 2.7)*

**Hostel Wardens were not staying in 10 test checked Pre-matric hostels during night. The Pre-matric girls hostels at Shoranur and Mundur were being used for various activities like conduct of meetings, etc., with outsiders as participants which impinged on the safety and security of girl children.**

*(Paragraphs 2.10.2.2 and 2.10.2.3)*

**Failure of Government to revamp the ITIs resulted in the ITIs continuing to offer outdated courses with negligible potential to attract offers of employment.**

*(Paragraph 2.11.2)*

**An ill-conceived proposal to enhance the number of Vijnan Vadis from 140 to 1000 led to poor results as only 19 per cent of the targeted sites could be identified and only 11.4 per cent of targeted Vijnan Vadis could be set up two years after the target date of completion.**

*(Paragraph 2.15)*

**Failure of Government to ensure creation of posts for running of Paramedical Institute resulted in denial of opportunity to SC students to pursue Paramedical courses as envisaged during 2013-15.**

*(Paragraph 2.16)*

**The efforts made by Government to improve the standards of education of SC students up to Secondary level yielded good results, but the results for Higher Secondary and Vocational Higher Secondary were not encouraging.**

*(Paragraph 2.18)*

## 2.1 Introduction

Education is the sheet anchor of any programme for uplifting the Backward Classes and socially disadvantaged groups. Recognising this fact, Scheduled Castes Development Department (SCDD) of the Government of Kerala implemented various schemes for the educational development of Scheduled Caste (SC) students. These schemes were in the form of either providing institutional facilities like nursery schools, Pre/Post-Matric Hostels, Model Residential Schools (MRS), Training Centres, etc., or extending financial assistance to SC students by way of scholarships, special incentives to talented students, reimbursement of fees and other financial incentives to encourage their education. The list of educational development schemes implemented by the SCDD as of March 2015 is exhibited in **Appendix 2.1**.

## 2.2 Organizational set up

At Government level, the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Scheduled Caste Development Department is responsible for implementing the schemes for the educational development of the SC students. At Department level, the Director of Scheduled Caste Development (Director) is incharge of the Department assisted by Regional Deputy Directors at Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. There were also 14 District Development Officers and 169 Scheduled Caste Development Officers at Block/Municipality/Corporation for ensuring effective implementation of schemes at field level.

## 2.3 Audit Objectives

The performance audit was conducted to assess whether:

- the objective of bringing equalisation of SC students with non-SC students has been achieved; and
- the overall financial management including releases and utilization of funds earmarked under various schemes for financial assistance to SC students was efficient and in line with the stated objectives of the schemes meant for SC students.

## 2.4 Audit Criteria

The audit findings were benchmarked against the criteria derived from the Scheme guidelines of Government of India (GOI), norms laid down by the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), orders of Government of Kerala (GOK), Departmental Circulars, Census data, statistics obtained from the Directorates of Public Instruction/Higher Secondary Education/Vocational Higher Secondary Education and Training Director of the Industrial Training Department.

## 2.5 Scope and methodology of Audit

The Performance Audit on Implementation of Educational Development Schemes for SC students covering the period 2010-15 was conducted from April to August 2015. It evaluated the efficacy of implementation of various educational development schemes run by the SCDD. Five<sup>4</sup> out of 14 districts in the State were selected for audit by two tier stratification sampling method using Probability Proportional to Size without Replacement (PPSWOR). Relevant records in Government Secretariat, the Directorate of SCDD at Thiruvananthapuram and Regional Offices at Thiruvananthapuram & Kozhikode were scrutinised during the course of audit. Besides, the District/Block Scheduled Caste Development Offices and all the Department run educational development institutions in the selected districts were test checked. A list of test checked institutions are given in **Appendix 2.2**.

Audit methodology included sample beneficiary survey to assess whether the beneficiaries of various schemes for development of educational and skill development actually derived the intended benefits and enhanced their capability to gain employment. An Entry Conference was held on 19 May 2015 with the Principal Secretary to Government, SCDD detailing the audit objectives, audit criteria and audit methodology. The audit findings were discussed during Exit Conference held on 11 January 2016 with Additional Chief Secretary of the SCDD, GOK.

## 2.6 Funding

Government of Kerala spent ₹1123.80 crore on various educational development schemes implemented by the SCDD during 2010-15. The budget provision and total expenditure for the years 2010-15 are given in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1: Budget allocation and expenditure**

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget allocation	Total Expenditure
2010-11	175.10	173.72
2011-12	193.82	190.94
2012-13	243.89	240.85
2013-14	256.80	255.75
2014-15	254.98	262.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>1124.59</b>	<b>1123.80</b>

(Source: Appropriation accounts)

### **Audit Findings**

The significant audit findings on various educational development schemes implemented by the SCDD are discussed in the following paragraphs.

<sup>4</sup> Idukki, Kannur, Kollam, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram

## 2.7 Nursery Schools

The SCDD operated 89 nursery schools in the State to improve the educational standards of SC children residing in thickly populated SC colonies situated in remote places. Besides ensuring the physical, mental, social, emotional and educational development of the children, these nursery schools having qualified teachers and ayahs were expected to adequately prepare them for formal education.

Children between the age of three and a half and five years were eligible for admission in nursery schools. The minimum number of children for a nursery class was to be maintained at 25 as far as possible and maximum restricted to 45. Twenty five *per cent* of these seats were to be reserved for non-SC children. It was envisaged that the nursery schools shall have a classroom, play room and a kitchen.

Audit visited all 27 nursery schools situated in five selected districts which were run by the SCDD. District wise details on the number of nursery schools and the actual/average roll strength of pupils during 2010-15 are given in **Appendix 2.3**.

Only five out of 27 nursery schools recorded the minimum required strength of 25 students in the selected districts. In the remaining 22 nursery schools, the average student strength ranged between nine and 23.

Audit identified inadequate infrastructure and proximity of Anganwadis as possible reasons for the lower strength in these nursery schools.

### 2.7.1 Inadequate Infrastructure

Eighteen of the 27 nursery schools suffered from inadequate infrastructure. Deficiencies like lack of water, absence of electric connection, rain water leaking through the roof, etc., were noticed which have been detailed in **Appendix 2.4**. The nursery school in Muriyankara in Thiruvananthapuram district suffered from all these deficiencies. While there was no electricity in eight nursery schools, water was not available in 11 nursery schools forcing the schools to depend on neighbouring houses for water.

The Government stated (January 2016) that the functioning of nursery schools was transferred to LSGIs in 1997 and therefore came under the purview of Local Self Government Institutions. During Exit Conference (January 2016), Government stated that it would assess the institutions and look into the issue of lack of infrastructure.

**Recommendation No. 1: Government should ensure adequate infrastructure in nursery schools to attract children for their overall development.**

### 2.7.2 Low attendance in nursery schools

We noticed that Anganwadis under the ICDS which were functional all through the year were delivering services similar to the ones offered by the nursery schools run by the Department which functioned only for ten months in a year. Anganwadis were also providing free diet to the children for the entire year against the provision of diet for ten months in the nursery schools

run by the Department. This could have been an incentive for parents to send their wards to Anganwadis instead of nursery schools run by the SCDD.

Government confirmed (January 2016) that the presence of Anganwadis, private nursery schools and nursery schools run by LSGIs were the main reasons for the low range of children in the SC nursery schools. While the proximity of Anganwadis and private nursery schools could be attributed as one of the reasons for lower student strength in the department run schools, the poor infrastructure in nursery schools also resulted in children migrating to better Anganwadis and private nursery schools. Though the GOK ordered (February 1997) that continuance of such nursery schools was not desirable where attendance was less than 50 *per cent* consecutively for two months, the Government stated in the Exit Conference (January 2016), that closing down of nursery schools with very low student strength goes against the very spirit of welfare of SC students and was perhaps not the ideal solution. As such, the Government stated that it would take necessary steps to increase the attendance rate in these nurseries.

## 2.8 Model Residential Schools

The SCDD operated three MRS<sup>5</sup> in the test checked districts of Idukki and Palakkad for providing opportunities to SC students similar to that available in residential schools like public schools. These schools had classes from Standards V to X/XII. Audit observations on the performance of students in the test checked MRS are given below.

The MRS, Kuzhalmannam commenced functioning in August 2010. As the first batch of students was yet to appear for the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examinations, Audit was unable to comment on the performance of its students. The commendable performance of MRS at Peermade and Thrithala are brought out below.

During 2010-15, MRS at Peermade and Thrithala recorded 100 *per cent* pass in the SSLC examination against the overall State average of 95 *per cent* and 89 *per cent* for SC students. In respect of the higher secondary examination, MRS, Peermade improved its pass percentage from 90 *per cent* in 2013-14 to 100 *per cent* during 2014-15. Performance of children passing out from the MRS, Thrithala also improved from 81 *per cent* in 2010-11 to 100 *per cent* in 2014-15.

Audit observed that while students from MRS, Peermade had appeared for the Higher Secondary examinations under Humanities stream, those from the MRS, Thrithala had appeared under only Science stream. Even though the Government had given sanction (July 2010) to start higher secondary courses in Science and Humanities streams at MRS Peermade, the Science stream was yet to commence due to paucity of space. Likewise, in MRS Thrithala, even though Government sanction was obtained (November 2007) to start higher secondary courses in Science and Humanities, only the Science stream was functional.

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<sup>5</sup> MRS Peermade at Idukki district, MRS Kuzhalmannam (Boys only) and MRS Thrithala (Girls only) at Palakkad district

Failure of SCDD to operate sanctioned courses even after five to seven years of approval resulted in depriving SC students of the option to study courses of their choice.

Government replied (January 2016) that proposals for admitting SSLC qualified students of MRS for further studies in Higher Secondary courses offering four optional subjects was under their consideration. It was also stated that an estimate for construction of an additional building at MRS, Peermade was being prepared and that the request for posting excellent teachers in the schools was under consideration of the General Education Department, GOK.

**Recommendation No. 2: Government should start courses in various streams viz., science, humanities and commerce to enable students to opt for study courses of their choice for better job opportunities.**

## 2.9 Model Residential Sports School

The Sree Ayyankali Memorial Government Model Residential Sports School (SAMRSS) in Thiruvananthapuram district was started (November 2002) with the aim of identifying SC students who excel in sports and provide training to compete in national and international sporting events. Admission was offered to SC and ST students in the ratio of 2:1 on the basis of their performance in physical efficiency test. The school follows co-gender education system and has a capacity of 30 students each year from Standards V to XII. The Higher Secondary section in the school offered education in Humanities besides training the children in various sports disciplines.

Audit assessed the performance of students in sports and offers the following observations.

### 2.9.1 Sports

The School participated in various National and State level Sports events as per the details given in **Table 2.2**.

**Table 2.2: Achievements of students**

Discipline	National level	State level	Total
Athletics	6	37	43
Judo	66	324	390
Football	2	57	59
Wrestling	8	180	188
Taekwondo	2	14	16
Gymnastics	-	-	-

(Source: Details collected from DDO for SC at Thiruvananthapuram)

Audit noticed that 216 gymnasts were practicing without adequate infrastructure like training hall and training equipment. Proposals for procurement of training equipment were submitted to the Director, SCDD in November 2014 which were pending approval (November 2015). Similarly, construction of a training hall for gymnasts at a cost of ₹62 lakh was awaiting finalization of tender.

GOK assured (January 2016) that the department would take necessary measures to improve the performance in gymnastics.

## 2.10 Pre-matric Hostels

Pre-matric hostels provided free accommodation and food for boarders studying in Standards V to X besides uniform, school bags, shoes and monthly pocket money of ₹100 and travelling expenses to their homes during Onam/ Christmas holidays. In the selected districts, there were 41 Pre-matric hostels (23 hostels for boys and 18 for girls) having total boarding capacity of 1388 (770 boys and 618 girls) as of April 2015.

Audit observations are given below.

### 2.10.1 Performance of Pre-matric hostellers in SSLC examinations

Audit examined the academic attainments of the Pre-matric hostellers in the SSLC examination conducted during the period 2010-15.

**Table 2.3: Academic status of hostellers**

STATUS	Palakkad			Kannur			Kollam			Thiruvananthapuram			Idukki		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Appeared	167	238	405	91	53	144	91	83	174	48	58	106	90	68	158
Passed	157	222	379	89	52	141	83	72	155	48	52	100	89	65	154
Failed	10	16	26	2	1	3	8	11	19	0	6	6	1	3	4
Pass per cent	94.01	93.28	93.58	97.80	98.11	97.92	91.21	86.75	89.08	100.00	89.66	94.34	98.89	95.59	97.47

(Source: Details collected from Pre-matric hostels)

The overall performance of the Pre-matric hostellers in the SSLC examination during 2010-15 in the test checked districts was equal to the State average of 95 per cent. The commendable performance of these Hostels is brought out below.

The Pre-matric hostellers in Kannur and Idukki districts performed well in SSLC examination with the pass percentage exceeding the State average of 95 per cent. Though the Pre-matric hostellers in Palakkad, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts could attain pass percentage ranging from 89.08 to 94.34 per cent and did not attain the State average of 95 per cent, their performance was commendable when viewed against the fact that the pass percentage of SC students in the State during the period was only 89 per cent.

Gender analysis of the results during 2010-15 revealed that girls performed better than boys in the SSLC examinations. Against 93 per cent of the boys passing the SSLC examinations in the test checked districts, girls recorded 96 pass per cent. The girls in Pre-matric hostels in Thiruvananthapuram district achieved 100 pass per cent during these years. Except for Kannur district, girls consistently performed better than boys in the remaining test checked districts.



## 2.10.2 General conditions of Pre-matric hostels

### 2.10.2.1 Infrastructure

Five<sup>6</sup> out of 41 test checked hostels were running in rented buildings. Three of these buildings were old and dilapidated and not suitable for the functioning of Pre-matric hostels. The Pre-matric hostel for boys at Thaliparamba in Kannur district which was functioning in a rented building was closed down in May 2015 due to the dilapidated condition of the building and the boarders were transferred to a hostel at Pazhayangadi in Kannur district.

As per Government guidelines (August 1986), inmates of Pre-matric hostels should be provided with cots, table, chairs, cupboard, mattress, etc. In all test checked Pre-matric hostels, Audit noticed that the students were not provided with many of these essential items for their stay. Inmates were forced to share cots or were made to sleep on the floor. Inmates in six<sup>7</sup> of the 41 pre-matric hostels were not provided with most of the basic facilities as detailed in **Appendix 2.5**.

The District Development Officer (DDO) of the District was the controlling officer of the hostels in the District and was responsible for ensuring proper running of the hostels. DDOs were required to inspect the hostels as many times as possible in a month and were expected to record deficiencies noticed at the time of inspection as also the instructions issued to the wardens and boarders. Among the worst affected Pre-matric hostels in terms of basic infrastructure and facilities were those at Mankara, Alanellur and Kumaranellur in Palakkad district, Azhikode and Sreekandapuram in Kannur district and Venjaramoodu in Thiruvananthapuram district. Audit verified the visitor's diaries relating to 2014-15 to determine whether the deficient infrastructure and other defects identified by Audit were noticed by the DDOs and necessary steps taken to rectify the defects. In the Pre-matric hostel at Mankara, though the DDO had noted (June 2015) in visitor's diary about poor infrastructure in the hostel and suggested shifting to a new rented building, the hostel was still running in the old building. Scrutiny of the visitor's diary in the hostels at Alanellur in Palakkad revealed that the DDO had never visited the Pre-matric hostel during 2010-15. In Kumaranellur, the DDO had offered (May 2014) only general comments while in Venjaramoodu and Azhikode, the DDOs had confirmed (August 2014 and June 2014) lack of infrastructure. Audit observed during spot inspection (November 2015) that necessary steps were not taken to rectify the defects pointed out by DDOs.

GOK informed (January 2016) that ₹1.65 crore was sanctioned for construction of Pre-matric hostel at Thalliparamba. However, the reply was silent regarding the hostels functioning in old and dilapidated buildings and supply of tables, armless chairs, etc. to the hostel inmates.

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<sup>6</sup> Alanellur, Mankara and Kollengode in Palakkad district, Kathirur and Sreekantapuram in Kannur district.

<sup>7</sup> Pre-matric hostels at Mankara, Alanellur and Kumaranellur in Palakkad district, Azhikode and Sreekantapuram in Kannur district and Venjaramoodu in Thiruvananthapuram district.

### 2.10.2.2 Manpower

One warden was posted in each of the pre-matric hostels. Wardens were responsible for ensuring the well being of the hostellers and smooth running of the hostels. It was, however, noticed that the hostel wardens were not staying in 10 test checked hostels at night which was against the directions issued by the SCDD in August 1997. The non-availability of wardens in hostels at night indicated lack of care and supervision to children apart from exposing them to avoidable risks.

Government admitted (January 2016) that the duty time of Warden was 24 hours and that two wardens were necessary on shift basis. It stated that posting of two wardens in each hostel was under its consideration. As such, the GOK may take early decision in the matter.

### 2.10.2.3 Safety and Security for Girls Hostels

The Pre-matric hostels for girls at Shoranur and Mundur in Palakkad district accommodated 123 and 190 students respectively during 2010-15. Government had stipulated (February 1961) that no outsider shall be allowed into the hostel premises. Audit noticed that the hostels were being used for various activities like conduct of meetings, etc., with outsiders as participants which impinged on the safety and security of the children as shown in **Table 2.4** below.

**Table 2.4: Details of girls hostels used for other purposes**

Name of Hostel	Details of inadmissible activities conducted in hostels	Remarks
Pre-matric girls hostel Shoranur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used for ward level meeting by LSG Authorities</li> <li>A new building constructed by SCDD for library/study/computer purpose of the hostellers was used as an Autism centre run by the SSA.</li> </ul>	-
Pre-matric girls hostel Mundur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used for ward level meeting by LSG Authorities</li> <li>Conducting examination for general public on the terrace of hostel building that can be accessed only through the staircase inside the building.</li> </ul>	Separate toilet for watchman was not available who had to use the toilet facility available inside the hostel thereby intruding on the privacy of the girl inmates of the hostel.

(Source: Details collected from Pre-matric hostels at Shoranur and Mundur)

During Exit Conference (January 2016), Government stated that the issue of using the Pre-matric girls hostels for other purposes would be looked into and suitable action would be taken against the defaulting officer(s).

## 2.11 Industrial Training Institutes

There are 44 ITIs exclusively for SC candidates under SCDD. The ITIs under the SCDD imparted training in 12 trades with course duration ranging from six months to two years. The ITIs were envisaged to train 1261 trainees (SC – 80 per cent, ST – 10 per cent and others – 10 per cent) every year. Audit test checked 16 ITIs run by the SCDD in four districts<sup>8</sup> and it was noticed that the percentage of students who qualified in the examination

<sup>8</sup> There are no ITIs in Idukki district

conducted by NCVT was only 52 *per cent* during the years 2010-15. The details of students enrolled and the pass percentage is given in **Appendix 2.6**.

Audit observed that poor performance was attributed to inadequate staff strength in these institutions. Against the requirement of 107 instructors in the 16 test checked ITIs, only 79 instructors were in position as of September 2014. There was a shortage of 28 instructors (26 *per cent*) in these ITIs.

GOK stated (January 2016) that students in the ITIs run by the department were of low academic level which resulted in poor results generated by ITIs.

Attributing poor pass percentage of students to their low academic level is not justified. Moreover, the department has a responsibility to support SC students by ensuring their capacity building to obtain ITI training for enabling them to secure jobs in the market. Thus, the department failed in its objective to ensure maximum pass percentage by providing adequate staff as also by adopting other such measures like coaching for their capacity building. The Government stated in the Exit Conference (January 2016) that the process of assessment of ITIs had already been initiated.

**Recommendation No. 3: Government may ensure adequacy of faculty members for strengthening ITIs and consider conducting special classes for weak students to perform better in examinations.**

#### **2.11.1 Discontinuance of admissions in mediocre ITIs**

The performance of the students enrolled in the Plumber trade in the test-checked seven ITIs ranged from 14 to 52 *per cent*. In ITI, Kanjiramkulam, none of the 36 students who had appeared for the exam passed during 2012-15. Similarly, in ITI Vettikavala and ITI Mariapuram, the pass percentage was only 11 and seven *per cent* respectively in respect of carpentry trade. The Labour & Skills Department of the Government recognising that the percentage of children passing out from these three ITIs was very poor directed (June 2014) not to admit students to these institutions during the academic year 2014-15. Audit observed that the SCDD did not conduct any study to find out the reasons for the poor performance of the students and put in place appropriate capacity building mechanism for such students. The decision of Labour and Skills Department not to admit such students was not justified as it was against the envisaged objective of the Government to empower them by acquiring such technical qualifications.

Government stated during the Exit Conference (January 2016) that it would look into reasons for poor performance of ITIs during 2012-15 and informed that providing extra classes for the students after normal hours in all ITIs would be considered.

#### **2.11.2 Revamping of ITIs**

With a view to revamp ITIs, the Director, SCDD, submitted a proposal (January 2012) to the Government to replace obsolete trades with new trades and to train 495 additional students by introducing 10 new trades in 20 ITIs at a cost of ₹15 crore. It was proposed to discontinue and replace courses in trades like Painter, Cutting and Sewing, Mechanic (Radio & TV) and Carpenter with subjects like Fashion technology, Draughtsman Civil, Welder,

Mechanic (industrial electronics) which had NCVT recognition and possessed employment potential, within India and abroad. Audit observed that despite receiving several clarifications and submission of revised proposals by the Director, SCDD, the Government was yet to take a decision on the issue except releasing (March 2012) Rupees five crore to the Kerala State SC/ST Residential Educational Society for the purpose, which was also parked in the Treasury Savings Bank account of Society in the absence of further instructions from Government.

Due to the failure of Government to revamp the ITIs, they were continuing to offer outdated courses with negligible potential to attract offers of employment.

GOK stated (January 2016) that the revamping of ITIs was being examined by the Government. It was informed during the Exit Conference (January 2016) that the process of reviewing the functioning of the ITIs had already been initiated by Government to improve their functioning. Audit observed that the delay in taking a decision has resulted in denying 495 students an opportunity to be trained in new trades.

## 2.12 Pre-Examination Training Centers

The SCDD established four Pre-Examination Training Centers (PETC) to equip job seekers for competitive examinations conducted by the State Public Service Commission, Union Public Service Commission, Banking Services Recruitment Board, etc. The PETCs besides imparting job oriented training for various competitive examinations, also offered courses in Stenography, Computer Software, Desktop Publishing and coaching for Medical and Engineering Entrance Examinations. Audit findings in respect of the test-checked PETCs at Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad were as under:

- The details of admission and placement for job oriented courses at the Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad centres of PETC during 2010-15 were as shown in **Table 2.5**.

**Table 2.5: Placements received by SC/OBC students**

Year	Total No. of trainings offered		Total No. of candidates		Total No. of SC candidates		Total No. of SC candidates who got placement		Total No. of OBC candidates who got placement	
	PETC Tvm	PETC Pkd	PETC Tvm	PETC Pkd	PETC Tvm	PETC Pkd	PETC Tvm	PETC Pkd	PETC Tvm	PETC Pkd
2010-11	5	3	332	335	243	257	21	9	37	11
2011-12	3	3	109	326	83	264	1	13	12	13
2012-13	4	3	127	155	83	123	0	4	8	1
2013-14	3	4	118	284	89	221	0	5	8	13
2014-15	4	5	85	376	70	288	0	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>1476</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>41</b>

(Source: Details collected from PETCs at Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad)

- The SC students comprised 74 per cent and 78 per cent respectively in the Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad PETCs. The placement rate to the total enrolment of SC students during the period 2010-15 was four

and three percentage respectively in Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad PETCs.

- Audit found that out of 1476 candidates who had attended various trainings at the PETC Palakkad during 2010-15, only 28 candidates had attended the centre from places beyond a radius of 25 kms. As such, the PETC, Palakkad functioned only as a centre catering to the needs of the local population instead of a regional centre as envisaged. Trainees attending various courses in PETCs from places beyond eight kilometres were paid ₹400 per month and those from within eight kilometres were paid ₹100 per month as stipend. Audit observed that GOK had issued orders (September 2009) to the Director, SCDD to pay the local/out station trainees the higher GOI rates of ₹750 and ₹1500<sup>9</sup> per month respectively. However, the trainees were still being paid only ₹100 and ₹400 per month. The Principal, PETC Palakkad also stated that the meager amount of stipend being paid was a reason for the low enrolment of students from distant places.
- A three months course on Data Entry and Software course was conducted by PETC, Thiruvananthapuram with admissible batch strength of 20 students during 2011-13 with 61 students attending the course. Audit noticed that the course was discontinued since 2013 as there were no willing persons to take up the job of the instructor at the proposed remuneration of ₹5,000 p.m. Audit was informed that a proposal for enhancing remuneration forwarded (May 2015) to the Director, SCDD was still awaiting approval (September 2015). Thus, the failure of the department to restart the course deprived SC students of being trained in Data Entry and Software. Government promised during Exit Conference (January 2016) to look into the issue.
- Admissions to Two year courses on Stenography were made once in two years. In the test checked PETCs at Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad, while 37 out of 74 students did not appear for the examination during 2010-14, only 10 passed the examination.

The Principal of PETC Palakkad, while admitting the poor performance of students in the Stenography Course stated that a proposal (June 2014) for revamping the stenography course by reducing the course duration from two years to one year by including word processing and DTP topics was pending with the Director (November 2015). The Director stated (December 2015) that the delay occurred due to some administrative inconvenience and that the courses would be commenced with sufficient number of instructors with attractive honorarium. During Exit Conference (January 2016), the Additional Secretary to Government stated that the issue would be looked into.

- In two test-checked PETCs at Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad, as against 642 (375 + 267) SC students enrolled in coaching for Medical/Engineering Entrance Examination during 2010-15, it was noticed that

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<sup>9</sup> GOI rates were revised to ₹1500 and ₹3000 for local/outstation candidates from August 2012 onwards.

102 students from Thiruvananthapuram (27 per cent) and 13 students from Palakkad (five per cent) had qualified in the entrance examination during 2013-14 only. No student from Palakkad centre had qualified in any other year.

Audit noticed that the faculty members at PETC Thiruvananthapuram were having higher qualifications than the faculty members of PETC Palakkad. Of the 32 teaching faculty members available at PETC Thiruvananthapuram during 2013-14, eleven possessed PhD while only two teachers possessed PhD in PETC Palakkad. The Principal of PETC Palakkad attributed the poor result to difficulty in getting good faculty due to inadequate remuneration paid to them. The reply was not acceptable in view of the fact that the PETC Thiruvananthapuram could obtain the services of well qualified teachers at the same remuneration as was being paid to the faculty of the PETC Palakkad.

**Recommendation No. 4: Government may strengthen PETC at Palakkad by providing superior teaching faculty to ensure successful coaching in the job oriented courses besides enabling the MBBS and B.Tech aspirants to perform better in the entrance examinations.**

### 2.13 Skill Development Programme for SC students

During 2010-15, the department planned to offer various skill development programmes to SC youth in association with agencies like the Kerala Institute of Labour and Employment (KILE), Kerala Health Research and Welfare Society (KHRWS) etc. However, Audit found that the programmes as conceived by the Director, SCDD did not materialise due to the reasons as detailed below.

**Table 2.6: Details of Skill Development Programmes**

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Details of Scheme	No. of students	Remarks
1.	Establishment of training centre and conducting Skill Development Programme for SC science graduates.	Courses on Dietary, Power Laundry Management, Laboratory Management, Ward and Operation Theatre Management	75 students each year	Though KHRWS had submitted the proposal for training students, they later admitted lack of infrastructure and expertise in running the course. SCDD failed to assess capability of KHRWS before entrusting the project.
2.	Diploma in Hotel Management	Nine months course in Food and Beverage Production, Food and Beverage Servicing and Housekeeping.	50 students	Training was to be conducted by Kerala Institute of Labour & Employment (KILE). GOK ordered KILE to discontinue the course as the course offered by KILE in tie up with IITM did not have recognition of any University or Academic Council. Thus, selection of an agency which was not eligible to conduct courses on hotel management deprived 50 SC students from being trained.

(Source: Details collected from Directorate and KHRWS)

Despite availability of funds amounting to ₹3.57 crore, the SCDD failed to effectively conceive, plan and implement schemes resulting in deprivation of training to SC beneficiaries and their resultant inability to improve their educational status.

GOK stated (January 2016) that ₹0.40 crore had since been remitted to Government in December 2015. It was also informed during the Exit Conference (January 2016) that directions had been issued to the departmental officers to remit ₹3.17 crore into Government accounts.

### 2.14 Free Supply of Laptops to SC Students

Government accorded (October 2012) Administrative Sanction for providing laptops to the first and second year SC students of MBBS and B.Tech courses who were in receipt of educational concessions from the Scheduled Castes Development Department. Government had ordered that the laptops should be provided to the students during financial year 2012-13. Details of procurement and issue of Laptops is given in **Table 2.7**.

**Table 2.7: Details of laptops issued/not issued**

Year	Name of Course	No. of SC students targeted	No. of students who received laptops	No. of students who were not given laptops
2012-13	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> year MBBS/B.Tech	3815	3750	65
2013-14	1 <sup>st</sup> year MBBS/B.Tech and 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> year M.Tech	2500	--	2500
2014-15	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> year B.Tech/M.Tech and 1 <sup>st</sup> year MCA	2202 <sup>10</sup>	--	2202

(Source: Details collected from Directorate)

An amount of ₹11.25 crore was withdrawn (March 2013) for purchase of computers. Though the Department was able to procure and supply 3750 laptops to eligible students of 2012-13 at a cost of ₹10.20 crore, supplementary requirement of 65 laptops to 65 eligible students of the year 2012-13 was not met as the firm selected for the supply turned down the request of the Department for additional supply. Though the tender conditions required the supplier to supply 10 *per cent* in excess of actual supply, the provision was not invoked by the department due to which 65 eligible SC students could not get laptops. During the following years, the purchase process did not materialise due to department's failure to finalise evaluation criteria, eligibility, etc., resulting in 4702 students not getting laptops during the years 2013-2015. All final year students lost opportunity to get laptops as they had already left the institution.

Government accepted (January 2016) the audit observation. During the Exit Conference (January 2016), it was informed that Government was considering to provide ₹25000 in cash towards reimbursement of cost of computers purchased by students from the year 2016 onwards.

### 2.15 Vijnan Vadis

Government decided (July 2011) to establish Vijnan Vadis in SC colonies in all 140 Legislative Assembly Constituencies in the State to serve as important centres having library, computers with internet facility, news papers and

<sup>10</sup> Excluding 1952 students of 2<sup>nd</sup> year B.Tech and 2<sup>nd</sup> year M.Tech already included in 2013-14.

periodicals to provide information to SC job seekers and students on current affairs and to help them to submit online application for competitive examinations. The Vijnan Vadis were to function under a committee comprising of students and job seekers from the colony. They were responsible for payment of internet charges, electricity charges and maintenance of computers. The Scheduled Caste Development Officers (SCDO) at the Block level were to monitor the functioning of the Vijnan Vadis. It was proposed to utilise existing facilities in 70 SC colonies for setting up the Vijnan Vadis and the same were established between July 2011 and January 2012.

In respect of the remaining 70, it was proposed to construct Vijnan Vadis with a 500 square feet building at cost of Rupees five lakh each and installation of computer with internet facility, furniture, books, etc., at a cost of ₹1.5 lakh. Recurring cost on maintenance of these centres were to be met by the SCDD. Based on proposal of Director, SCDD, subsequently, Government issued (January 2012) administrative sanction to construct 1000 Vijnan Vadis in 1000 SC colonies, where land was available at a total cost of ₹50 crore. The construction of the Vijnan Vadis was entrusted (February 2012) to Kerala Police Housing Construction Corporation Ltd (KPHCC). The entire amount of ₹50 crore was credited to the KPHCC in February 2012. As per MoU between the Department and KPHCC (April 2012), the work was required to be completed by KPHCC before 31 March, 2013. Audit observed as under:

- KPHCC informed Audit (December 2015) that out of 1000 Vijnan Vadis proposed, only 619 sites were identified by the SCDD of which 190 sites were found to be fit after inspection of site by KPHCC. In the remaining 429 cases, sites could not be located during joint inspection of SCDD officers and KPHCC staff. A few identified sites were not suitable for construction with ordinary estimates due to reasons such as sites being on filled up land, water logged pond, weak soil, no access to the site, etc.
- As of November 2015, suitable sites for setting up only 190 Vijnan Vadis were identified of which 114 Vijnan Vadis were constructed. In respect of the remaining, work for 66 Vijnan Vadis was awarded and the remaining 10 were yet to be tendered. Audit observed that only 89 Vijnan Vadis were operational as on January 2016.
- Audit noticed that two<sup>11</sup> of the four test checked Vijnan Vadis<sup>12</sup> were functioning satisfactorily. However, while the Vijnan Vadi at Chellora was non-functional due to non-functioning of computer since September 2015, the Centre at Kudapanakunnu in Thiruvananthapuram district was non-functional since July 2015 due to disconnection of electricity by the Kerala State Electricity Board for failure to remit electricity charges. Non-functioning of such Vijnan Vadis is attributed to the failure of respective managing committees to ensure continued operation of their Vijnan Vadis.

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<sup>11</sup> Morazha in Kannur district and Rajaji nagar in Thiruvananthapuram district

<sup>12</sup> Two Vijnan Vadis set up in Chellora and Morazha in Kannur district and two Vijnan Vadis in Kudapanakunnu and Rajaji Nagar in Thiruvananthapuram district.



- GOK confirmed (January 2016) that most of the 600 plots identified by SCDD to construct Vijnan Vadis were later found to be unfit for construction by KPHCC. Audit found that the proposal of Director, SCDD to enhance the number of Vijnan Vadis to 1000 was ill conceived as availability of land was not ensured before venturing into the scheme. As of December 2015, ₹44 crore was blocked for more than two years.

Thus, as of December 2015, only 11.4 *per cent* of the targeted number of Vijnan Vadis could be set up after a lapse of two years from the targeted date of completion. Significantly, of the 114 Vijnan Vadis constructed by GOK, only 89 were functional exhibiting laxity of Government on the issue.

## **2.16 Paramedical Institute, Alappuzha**

GOK accorded (January 2004) administrative approval to start two year paramedical courses in Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (D.MLT), Diploma in Radiological Technology (DRT) and Diploma in Ophthalmic Assistance (DOA) in three Medical colleges<sup>13</sup>. It was envisaged to train 20 students per course every year. Government thereafter (November 2008) issued administrative sanction for construction of a building for Paramedical Institute for SC students at Medical College, Alappuzha at an estimated cost of ₹4.39 crore. The building, constructed at a cost of ₹5.44 crore was taken over by the Principal, Medical College, Alappuzha in October 2013.

Audit noticed that even though the building for Paramedical Institute was constructed with the help of funds provided by SCDD, the courses were yet to commence (November 2015) for lack of faculty as proposal for creation of posts submitted to Government in 2012 was awaiting its approval.

Audit further observed that in the meanwhile, Government allowed (September 2012) to utilise half of the newly constructed building for functioning of a new Dental College at Alappuzha. The Special Officer appointed for setting up the Dental College emphasised that since “the building was idling for the last three years for want of creation of posts and other infrastructure and even if the posts are sanctioned, the likelihood of getting Medical Doctors exclusively for teaching SC/ST students in a Paramedical Institute is very unlikely”, the building for the Paramedical courses be converted exclusively to a Dental College.

Audit observed that instead of ensuring creation of posts for running Paramedical Institute for SC students, the Government allowed the utilisation of the building of Paramedical Institute for use as new Dental College.

Thus, the Government failed to achieve the objective of running the institution for the benefit of SC students even after a lapse of three years. GOK confirmed (January 2016) the audit observations and stated that the department had taken steps to regain the building from Director of Medical Education, for commencement of three Paramedical courses for SC students. During Exit Conference (January 2016), Government promised to look into the issue of creation of posts for Paramedical courses. The Dental College was

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<sup>13</sup> Alappuzha, Kottayam and Kozhikode

still (January 2016) functioning in the building which was actually built for Paramedical courses for SC students.

**Recommendation No. 5: Government may take over the building from the Dental college authorities so as to start paramedical courses for the benefit of SC students.**

## 2.17 Grant of Financial assistances for SC students

### 2.17.1 Assistance for Post-matric studies

The SCDD extended financial assistance for post-matric studies to SC students by way of payment of fees, boarding charges to institutions and payments to students like lump sum grants and scholarships to encourage their education. Since 2008, disbursement of the financial assistance was being made online through a software ‘e-grantz’ developed by C-DIT. Under this arrangement, the educational institutions were required to verify the details of the students and forward the fund requirement statements within 20 days from the beginning of classes to the respective Additional District Development Officer online for obtaining sanction of the Director. Based on the sanction, the SC Development Directorate was to upload the names of students, Bank Account Numbers, IFS Code etc., in the internet banking module. The bank<sup>14</sup> in turn was required to ensure seamless and instantaneous transfer of amount sanctioned to the accounts of students. The bank was required to provide periodic transaction statements to the Director.

Instances of delay in disbursement of financial assistances through e-grantz ranging upto six years were noticed in selected districts during 2010-15 as shown in **Table 2.8**.

**Table 2.8: Details of delay of financial assistance**

(₹ in lakh)

District	Delay up to one year		Delay from one to two years		Delay from two to five years		Delay beyond five years	
	No. of students	Amount	No. of students	Amount	No. of students	Amount	No. of students	Amount
Tvpm	24600	319.45	19071	114.15	19984	154.08	2093	1.77
Kollam	16106	122.09	12924	60.09	11154	51.29	907	0.69
Idukki	7740	73.91	5444	16.09	4586	18.36	197	0.01
Palakkad	19074	16.03	7462	17.55	12829	84.21	1139	1.23
Kannur	9152	98.32	5679	16.19	6604	37.18	445	0.44

(Source: Details collected from Directorate)

Audit noticed from an analysis of the database that 1084 institutions in the selected districts had failed to generate the online statements for claiming financial assistance to SC students through e-grantz during the period 2010-15. It was further noticed by Audit that, in the test checked GLVHSS Arayur at Thiruvananthapuram, and NSS Law College, Kollam, four and seven students respectively were even denied the benefits through e-grantz as their claims were not processed by these institutions.

<sup>14</sup> State Bank of India, Thampanoor Branch

### 2.17.2 Pocket money and allowances to Pre-matric hostellers

Under the educational concession scheme, SC Students residing in pre-matric hostels were eligible for pocket money at the rate of ₹100<sup>15</sup> per month with effect from June 2012. They were also entitled for allowances for soap and oil (₹75 for girls and ₹50 for boys) towel, comb, bus fare (₹60) and for hair cutting (₹30 for boys) every month.

While 2707 hostellers were not given allowances amounting to ₹0.37 crore, 2074 hostellers were not paid pocket money amounting to ₹0.18 crore in 37 of 41 test checked hostels during 2010-15. Details of disbursement of pocket money and allowances in the test checked districts are given in **Table 2.9**.

**Table 2.9: Details of disbursement of pocket money and allowances**

Sl. No.	District and No. of hostels	Pocket money	Allowances	No. of students denied during 2010-15		Total
				Boys	Girls	
1	Thiruvananthapuram (6)	Not released	Released	174	459	633
2	Kollam (8)	Not released	Released	485	427	912
3	Idukki (5)	Released	Not released	250	631	881
4	Palakkad (11)	Released	Not released	1102	470	1572
5	Kannur (7)	Partially released	Partially released	354	370	724

(Source: Details collected from DDO for SC and SCDOs)

Audit observed that as per Government orders, both pocket money and allowances were to be disbursed to pre-matric hostellers. The details given in the table indicate that the district level authorities selectively implemented the Government orders. Due to the failure of the SCDD to adhere to orders of GOK, 2074 hostellers in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Kannur districts were not paid pocket money amounting to ₹17.91 lakh while 2707 hostellers in Idukki, Palakkad and Kannur districts were not paid allowances amounting to ₹36.68 lakh<sup>16</sup> during 2010-15.

GOK replied (January 2016) that pocket money at the rate of ₹140 for boys and ₹135 for girls was being given to hostellers as per Government order dated 13 May 2010 and since this was higher than the pocket money of ₹100 stipulated in Government Order dated 11 January 2012, audit observation was not correct.

Reply of the Government is not acceptable as ₹140 for boys and ₹135 for girls as stated in Government order quoted first above referred to allowances for purchase of soap, oil, etc., while ₹100 referred in Government order quoted second is pocket money. Besides, the handbook for SCDD also stipulated payment of both allowances and pocket money to the students. Due to lack of clarity on the part of departmental officers, the SC students could not receive the envisaged benefits in violation of Government's own orders, besides defeating the intended benefits of the scheme.

<sup>15</sup> This was ₹70 per month during the period 2008-2012

<sup>16</sup> This includes ₹26,325 which should have been paid to 135 hostellers in Kannur district as allowances.

**Recommendation No. 6: Government may reiterate and clarify the position about the entitlement of students for the pocket money and allowances so that the students are able to get the same.**

### **2.17.3 Tuition fee and Special fee re-imbursement**

While SC students studying in Government and Government aided schools were exempted from payment of Tuition Fees, SC students studying in recognised un-aided schools were entitled for reimbursement of tuition fee and special fee at the rate of ₹1,333 per annum up to Standards I to VII and at the rate of ₹2000 per annum for students in Standards VIII to X. Audit, however, noticed that 2078 students of 54 recognised un-aided schools in four selected districts did not get the Tuition fee and special fee reimbursement during the period 2013-15 because managements of 53 of these 54 schools did not claim the assistance for SC students in their schools as detailed in **Appendix 2.7**.

Audit further observed that the application for assistance for six SC students forwarded by the lone school viz. NSS English High School, Ottapalam to the SCDO, Ottapalam was not accepted on the grounds that the institution was an English medium school and hence the SC children were not eligible for financial assistance. The contention of the SCDO while rejecting the claim of the NSS English High School, Ottapalam was erroneous in view of the fact that Government had ordered in July 2009 that all SC students, irrespective of the medium of instruction, were eligible for the assistance.

The failure of managements of educational institutions and Government functionaries together deprived 2078 students of eligible financial assistance, which is a matter of concern. GOK stated (January 2016) that the instance pointed out by audit would be looked into.

**Recommendation No. 7: Government may put in place necessary system to ensure reimbursement of tuition fee and special fee and also monitor its implementation by way of appropriate reporting mechanism.**

### **2.17.4 Pre-matric scholarship for SC students of classes IX and X (100 per cent CSS)**

GOI launched (July 2012) the pre-matric scholarship for SC students of classes IX and X to minimise the incidence of dropout and to ensure that the SC children performed better in Classes IX and X. This was to ensure that they had a better chance of progression to the post-matric stage of education. Scholarships at the rate of ₹150 per month to day-scholars and at the rate of ₹350 per month to hostellers were to be paid to such students whose parents/guardians' income from all sources did not exceed ₹2 lakh per annum. Ad-hoc grants for books were also to be paid to day-scholars and hostellers at the rate of ₹750 and ₹1000 per annum respectively.

Audit noticed that out of 93,414 claims sanctioned during 2014-15, 11,381 claims amounting to ₹2.71 crore were rejected by the bank designated for the implementation of the scheme, due to incorrect data. As details of such cases were not available with the department, Audit took up the matter with the designated bank which informed that details of such cases had already been given to the department. Audit observed that despite receipt of intimation from bank, the department did not take any appropriate action to identify the

beneficiaries for disbursement of scholarships. Thus, due to lack of vigilance and monitoring on the part of departmental authorities, 11,381 students were deprived of the benefits which could have helped them in pursuing their further studies.

The Director admitted (October 2015) the flaws in the fund disbursement of the scholarship scheme and stated that the issue was noticed only at the instance of audit.

**Recommendation No. 8: Government may establish necessary monitoring mechanism for ensuring payment of scholarship to students through proper liaison with bank and educational institutions.**

## **2.18 Equalisation with non-SC students**

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1992 places great emphasis on the removal of disparity among different social classes. Ensuring sustained improvement in enrolment, retention and successful completion of courses by SC students at various levels of education is vital in improving their educational status and social upliftment. Audit noticed that the Directorate was not in possession of data on enrolment, dropout, pass out, etc., at various levels of education. Audit findings on data analysis on educational indicators of SC students compared with non-SC students at Secondary level, Higher Secondary level and VHSE were as under.

### **2.18.1 Secondary level**

Audit observed that while the pass percentage of SC and non-SC category students in Secondary level during 2010-11 was 82 *per cent* and 92 *per cent* respectively, these figures improved considerably to 97 *per cent* and 99 *per cent* respectively during the year 2014-15. This indicates that the efforts made by Government to improve the standards of education of students up to Secondary level have yielded good results.

### **2.18.2 Higher Secondary level**

At higher secondary level, while 69 *per cent* of SC students passed in 2011-12, the number of non-SC category students passed was 80 *per cent*. In 2013-14, these figures were 54 and 71 *per cent* respectively. This shows that in addition to a fall in the percentage of passed candidates, the gap between general category and SC students widened from 11 *per cent* to 17 *per cent*.

### **2.18.3 Vocational Higher Secondary level**

In respect of vocational courses, while 66 *per cent* of SC students passed in 2010-11, the number of passed candidates in the general category was 82 *per cent*. Audit noticed an increase in the pass percentage to 69 *per cent* and 82 *per cent* respectively in 2014-15. However, the gap between the pass percentage of General category students and the SC students decreased from 16 *per cent* in 2010-11 to 13 *per cent* in 2014-15.

Audit observed that the attempts made by Government to bring SC students at par with General Category students yielded results only up to Secondary level.

## 2.19 Conclusion

The Nursery schools run by the Department lacked in infrastructure and had very low student strength. The performance of students in the Model Residential Schools at Peermade and Thrithala during 2010-15 in the SSLC examination was commendable. The overall performance of pre-matric hostellers in the SSLC examination during 2010-15 in the test checked districts was equal to the State average of 95 *per cent* which is very satisfactory. Although the efforts made by Government to improve the standards of education of students up to Secondary level yielded good results, the same cannot be said for Higher Secondary/Vocational Higher Secondary and ITIs. Instances of delay in disbursement of financial assistances ranging up to six years were noticed in selected districts during 2010-15, which speaks about bad implementation of the scheme.

Failure of the department to commence the Paramedical Institute for SC students at Medical College, Alappuzha despite construction of a building for the purpose, failure to implement skill development programmes, the discontinuance of Data Entry and Software courses conducted by the PETC, Thiruvananthapuram since 2013, etc., resulted in depriving the SC children of the means to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to gain employment.