

Approximately 36.45 lakh children in the Age Group of 3-6 years are attending Pre-school Education regularly at the 1.19 lakh Anganwadi Centres in the State.

Under Mission 'Vatsalya', the Department has provided care and shelter to more than 6,200 children through Government and NGO-run Homes, Specialized Adoption Agencies, and Open Shelters. Additionally, the Department has facilitated 189 adoptions, provided 1,391 sponsorships, and ensured the restoration and repatriation of 9,553 children.

The Department runs 37 Shakti Sadan Shelter Homes for women in difficult circumstances, and 23 One Stop Centres for women affected by violence. There are 10 Homes for Vagrants, and 31 Shelter Homes specifically for the Urban Homeless in Kolkata, Howrah and Asansol Municipal Corporation. Further, the Department runs 2 Half-Way Homes called 'Pratyay' which shelter persons who have recovered from mental illnesses until they are able to transition to independent living. The Department has made all efforts to re-unite Shelter Home residents with their families.

3.28 Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education

The Department of Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education fosters inclusive growth by implementing initiatives in education, skill development, and sustainable livelihoods for minority communities. Its emphasis on

e-governance ensures efficient and transparent service delivery.

The Aikyashree scholarship scheme, launched in 2019-20, received around 45 lakh applications in 2024-25, with over 16 lakh scholarships disbursed till 31st December, 2024. Till date 33 lakh scholarships have been disbursed. Additionally, 898 education loans to meritorious students belonging to Minority Communities for pursuing Professional/Technical/Vocational courses in India and abroad amounting to Rs. 21.83 crore have been sanctioned this year for meritorious minority students pursuing various courses.

To promote entrepreneurship, Term Loans and Micro Finance were extended to 9,201 beneficiaries and 52,707 SHG women members, respectively, totaling Rs. 245.34 crore in loans this year. Since 2011, Term Loans and Micro Finance have benefitted 1,29,679 and 13,57,874 beneficiaries, respectively, with financial expenditures of Rs. 1,133 crore and Rs. 2,264 crore.

This year, significant steps have been taken to modernize Madrasah education through the creation and upgrading of infrastructure like smart classrooms, e-Books, and computer labs. Approval has been granted for 600 smart classrooms, 100 digital laboratories, and the upgrading of science laboratories in 76 Madrasahs, to be completed within this year.

The department has implemented several online initiatives, including registration for board exams, data verification, and applications for Post Publication Review (PPR) and Post Publication Scrutiny (PPS). The West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education has adopted the semester system for the Fazil course, aligning it with the WBCHSE system.

The government focuses on bridging infrastructure gaps in minority areas through schemes like MsDP, IMDP, and MDW. This year, Rs. 92.42 crore was released under MsDP, Rs. 65.12 crore under IMDP, and over Rs. 120.30 crore under MDW, benefiting multiple districts. Since 2011, more than 5.05 lakh projects have been completed under these schemes, with a total expenditure exceeding Rs. 10,337 crore.

Aliah University has grown to include 23 departments and 50 programmes, earning a B+ accreditation from NAAC. During 2024-25 year, 1,939 new students enrolled in various programs, with 109 new PhD students and 35 PhD degrees awarded. The university's Training and Placement Cell organized campus drives resulting in job offers for 177 graduates.

To improve educational access for minority students, 605 hostels are being established, with 463 already operational. Each student receives an annual maintenance grant of Rs. 10,000.

In minority-concentrated areas, 305 Karmatirth as (Marketing Hubs) are being constructed to support artisans, cultivators, and self-employment opportunities for minority youth and SHG members. This year, 13 Karmatirthas became operational, totaling 266, with 23 more expected by the end of the fiscal year and the remaining 16 in various construction stages.

WBMDFC, WBSHC, and Urdu Academy have organized coaching for competitive government job exams. The Jogyashree Civil Services Coaching for Minorities was launched to assist 100 aspirants of IAS and other UPSC Exams. WBMDFC provided coaching for 1,800 candidates for Kolkata Police and West Bengal Police recruitment.

The department prioritized skill development training for minority youth through institutions like NIFT, MSME Tool Rooms, and WEBEL. Currently, 135 candidates are enrolled in NIFT courses and 140 in MSME Tool Rooms courses. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program provided certification to over 4,000 masons in Murshidabad and Malda after a three-day course and evaluation. Training in mushroom cultivation was offered to over 900 youths in various districts. RPL training for traditional crafts like Jori work, gems and jewellery, and the leather industry is set to complete within the financial year.

WBMDFC launched a short-term Entrepreneur Development Programme (EDP) to enhance business skills

for loan beneficiaries, training over 2,300 individuals this year. The department also focused on minority development projects, including construction at Aliah University, boundary walls of grave yards, rural infrastructure, English Medium Madrasahs, and vocational training. Since 2011, Rs. 1,278 crore has been used for 9,371 boundary walls, and Rs. 2,451 crore for housing rehabilitation for destitute minority women, benefiting over 2.5 lakh women.

3.29 Backward Classes Welfare

The Backward Classes Welfare Department is dedicated to the holistic development of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. With a focus on education, skill development, and socio-economic upliftment, the department ensures inclusive growth for marginalized communities across the State.

All Sub-divisions are now using online facility for issuing Caste Certificates. During 2024-25, 2,39,702 Caste Certificates have been issued till date. Since, May, 2011, 1,64,42,042 Castes Certificates have been issued.

‘Taposili Bandhu’– a social pension scheme provides all the senior citizens of SC community a monthly pension @ Rs. 1,000/-. Till date under this scheme, around 11,05,333 beneficiaries are getting monthly pension with a financial involvement of Rs.781.42 crore in 2024-25. Since inception, total expenditure incurred under the said scheme amounts to Rs.5,225.59 crore.