(d) Regulation 8 of the Board of Trust Regulations, 2001, empowers the Board of National Trust to decide the criteria for participation in Trusts schemes and programmes as per terms and conditions laid down therein.

Proposal to amend laws related to dalits

†*528. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the existing acts/laws related to Dalits, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) by when, the final decision would to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT): (a) and (b) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) (POA) Act, 1989 was enacted and brought into force on 31.01.1990, with a view to "prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, to provide for Special Courts for the trial of such offences and for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of such offences". The PoA Act extends to the whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir, and responsibility for its implementation primarily rests with State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

Based on the consultation process with various stakeholders and with an objective to deliver members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes a greater justice as well as an enhanced deterrent to the offenders, amendments in the PoA Act have been considered to broadly cover the following five areas:

I. Amendments to Chapter II (Offences of Atrocities) to include new definitions, to re-phrase existing sections and expand the scope of presumptions.

II. Institutional Strengthening.

III. Appeals.

IV. Establishing Rights of Victims and Witnesses.

V. Strengthening preventive measures.

Accordingly consequent upon approval of the Government, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2014, to amend the PoA Act, has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 16.07.2014.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.