

(b) whether Government plans to empower the State with provisions to utilise Buddhist quota that it be not shifted to other States but be left for other minority communities students in Maharashtra; and

(c) what action has been taken so far on this request and whether this can be expedited?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI):

(a) to (c) There is State/UT-wise and community-wise physical allocation under the Merit-cum-Means (MCM) based Scholarship Scheme implemented throughout the country (including State of Maharashtra). The Scheme guidelines, further stipulates that if the physical target of scholarship for a particular minority community in a State/UT is not utilized, it will be re-distributed among the same minority community in other States/UTs strictly in accordance with merit and without disturbing the national ratio. The Government has no proposal to change this stipulation.

Diversion of Haj subsidy fund

463. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to divert Haj subsidy fund to other welfare schemes meant for minority welfare;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any decision for the proper utilisation of fund meant for minority welfare; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI): (a) to (d) The subsidy given by the Government of India for making arrangements of air travel for Haj pilgrims going through the Haj Committee of India is reflected in the budget of Ministry of Civil Aviation, which is the nodal Ministry in this regard. The Supreme Court in its judgment dated 08.05.2012, *inter alia* observed that Haj subsidy is something that is best done away with and directed the central Government to progressively reduce the amount of subsidy so as to completely eliminate it within a period of 10 years. It also observed that the subsidy money may be more profitably used for upliftment of the community in education and other indices of social development. Accordingly, Haj subsidy has been gradually reduced since the year 2013 and it has been decided to discontinue it from Haj 2018. The budget for the year 2018-19 for the Ministry of Minority Affairs has been increased by ₹ 505 crore. It has been decided to allocate bulk of the additional funding for educational empowerment of minority communities especially for girls.