

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3340
ANSWERED ON - 24/03/2021

WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS

3340. SHRI SANJAY RAUT

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether it is a fact that the number of senior citizens living in the country are facing various social, health and economic problems during the last three years;
- (b) if so, details thereof and Government's response thereto;
- (c) whether Government is considering to create more old age homes for the senior citizens in various parts of the country, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for the welfare of senior citizens?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)

(a) & (b) To counter social, health and economic problems of senior citizens, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing National Action Plan for Senior Citizens (NAPSrC) and Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY); Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE); Ministry of Rural Development administers Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) and Ministry of Finance implements Pradhan Mantri Vayo Vandana Yojana (PMVVY). Details of these Schemes are at **Annexure**. In addition to these schemes of Government of India State Governments also run their own schemes and programmes for welfare of the senior citizens.

(c) The National Policy on Older Persons'99 considers institutional care as the last resort in old age and promotes Family as the most vital non-formal social security for senior citizens. However, as per Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, State Governments may establish and maintain such number of old age homes at accessible places, as it may deem necessary, in a phased manner, beginning with at least one in each district to accommodate a minimum of 150 indigent senior citizens.

(d) For the welfare of senior citizens, Government of India has been implementing various Schemes and Programmes through different Ministries and Departments. Various concessions/benefits are also earmarked for them. Details are given at **Annexure**.

[Part (d) of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3340 for 24.03.2021 regarding 'Welfare of Senior Citizens' raised by Hon'ble M.P. Shri Sanjay Raut]

Details of Schemes and Programmes being implemented by Government of India

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment

(i) Scheme of National Action Plan for the Welfare of Senior Citizens (NAPSrC)

NAPSrC brings together articulation of each of the current schemes, future plans, strategies and targets and maps it with schemes/programmes, accountabilities, financials and clear outcomes. This Plan takes care of the top four needs of the senior citizens viz financial security, food, health care and human interaction /life of dignity. It also includes the facets of safety/protection and general wellbeing of the elderly beginning from awareness generation and sensitization of the society.

2. The National Action Plan for the Welfare of Senior Citizens (NAPSrC) is an umbrella scheme, effective since 1st April 2020, has four sub-schemes under it, namely:

- **Scheme of Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC):** Setting up of Homes to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens, especially indigent senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing.
- **State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC):** The Government of India perceives a major and critical role of all State Governments in partnering and implementing this Action Plan for welfare of senior citizens. Each State/UT is expected to plan and strategize taking into account their local considerations and frame their own State Action Plans for the welfare of their senior citizens.
- **Convergence with Initiatives of other Ministries/Departments in Government of India in the field of Senior Citizens Welfare (CWMSrC):** The NAPSrC has identified initiatives to be taken by different Departments for the benefit of senior citizens. These initiatives would be collated, department-wise and communicated to them for proposing Annual Action Plans in collaboration with this department.
- **Media, advocacy, capacity building, research and study, pilots and any other project aimed towards the welfare of the senior citizens and falling under the scope and coverage of the NAPSrC through NISD (NISDSrC):** National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), an autonomous body of this Department, is expected to be the

resource centre on senior citizens in the country. It will be equipped to implement directly any project in furtherance of the objectives of the NAPSrC.

3. Under the Scheme of Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC), grants upto 100% of project cost are given for running and maintenance the following projects:-

- (i) Senior Citizens' Homes for 25 destitute Senior Citizens to provide food, care and shelter.
- (ii) Senior Citizens' Homes for 50 Elderly Women including those under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) to provide food, care and shelter.
- (iii) Continuous Care Homes and Homes for senior citizens afflicted with Alzheimer's disease/ Dementia for a minimum of 20 Senior Citizens who are seriously ill requiring continuous nursing care and respite or those who are afflicted with Alzheimer's disease/ Dementia.
- (iv) Mobile Medicare Units to provide medical care to the Senior Citizens living in rural, isolated and backward areas.
- (v) Physiotherapy Clinics for Senior Citizens for a minimum of 50 Senior Citizens per month.
- (vi) Regional Resource and Training Centres (RRTCs) monitors and provides technical support, advocacy, networking, training and capacity building for effective delivery of service by the Centres for Senior Citizens, funded by the Ministry.
- (vii) Other activities considered suitable to meet the objectives of the scheme, including implementation of the provisions of National Policy for Senior Citizens (NPSrC)

4. Under the Scheme, assistance is sanctioned to the following agencies subject to the terms and conditions laid down by this Ministry:-

- Priority to be given to the State Governments / UT Administrations for supporting the projects under the Scheme of IPSrC through Registered Societies/ Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / Local bodies, in the vicinity of Hospitals, as far as possible;
- Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organizations;
- Institutions or Organizations set up by Government as autonomous/ subordinate bodies;
- Government Recognized Educational Institutions, Charitable Hospitals/ Nursing Homes, and recognized youth organizations such as Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)

5. Under State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC), the Government of India perceives a major and critical role of all State Governments in partnering and implementing the Action Plan for welfare of senior citizens. Appreciating the critical and significant role of States/UTs, each State/UT is expected to plan and strategize taking into account their local considerations and frame their own State Action Plans for the welfare of their senior citizens. This State Action Plan may comprise a long-term strategy for five years as well as Annual Action Plans and this Department shall release funds to the States/UTs for formulation and implementation of their State Action Plans.

(ii) Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY): Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices for Senior Citizens

The Scheme of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) has been formulated by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with an objective to provide aids and assisted living devices viz. walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quadpods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures and spectacles, free of cost to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age related disabilities/infirmities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and loco-motor disabilities. The Scheme has been revised w.e.f. F.Y. 2020-21. Under the revised Scheme, the criteria of selection of beneficiaries have been extended to include not only those senior citizens belonging to BPL category but also senior citizens with monthly income not more than Rs. 15000/- and who suffer from age related disabilities/infirmities as mentioned above.

2. Under the revised Scheme of RVY, the number of devices hitherto provided has been increased. At present, following are the items that have been included for distribution:

- (a) Generic Items: (1) Walking sticks (2) Elbow crutches (3) Walkers/Crutches, (4) Tripods/Quadpods (5) Hearing Aids (6) Artificial Dentures, and (7) Spectacles.
- (b) Special Items: (1) Wheelchairs, (2) Wheel Chairs with Commode, (3) Chair/Stool with Commode, (4) Silicon Foam Cushion, (5) Knee Brace, (6) Spinal Support, (7) Cervical Collar, (8) Lumbosacral Belt (LS), (9) Walker/Roalator with Brakes, (10) Walking Stick with Seat, (11) Foot Care Kit:- (i) Flexi Gel Socks, (ii) Socks Cusion Sandal, (iii) Silicon Insole (Complete Foot/Ankle) and (iv) Insole with Pressure Point Relief.

Other Initiatives of D/o Social Justice and Empowerment

1. **National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP), 1999:** National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) had been announced in January 1999 to reaffirm the commitment to ensure the well-being of the older persons. The Policy envisaged State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons, equitable share in development, protection against abuse and exploitation, and availability of services to improve the quality of their lives. The primary objectives were to encourage individuals to make provision for their own as well as their spouse's old age; to encourage families to take care of their older family members; to enable and support voluntary and non-governmental organizations to supplement the care provided by the family; to provide care and protection to the vulnerable elderly people; to provide adequate healthcare facility to the elderly; to promote research and training facilities to train geriatric care givers and organizers of services for the elderly; and to create awareness regarding elderly persons to help them lead productive and independent live.

2. **The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007:** The MWPSA Act, 2007 had been enacted in December 2007 to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. The Act provides for Maintenance of Parents/ senior citizens by children/ relatives made obligatory and justiciable through Tribunals, Revocation of transfer of property by senior citizens in case of neglect by relatives, Penal provision for abandonment of senior citizens, Establishment of Old Age Homes for Indigent Senior Citizens, Adequate medical facilities and security for Senior Citizens.

In order to make the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007 more contemporary to the needs of senior citizens at large, amendments, such as, adoption of uniform age criteria to define a 'senior citizens', registration and prescribing minimum standards of service, infrastructure, manpower etc. in Senior Citizens Care Homes/Multi-service Day Care Centres, rating of agencies providing Home Care services to senior citizens etc. have been proposed. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 11.12.2019.

3. **Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF):** In pursuance of the Budget Announcement, 2015-16, a "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund" has been created to be utilized for such schemes, for promoting financial security of senior citizens, healthcare and nutrition of senior citizens, welfare of elderly widows, schemes relating to Old Age Homes, Short Stay Homes and Day Care of senior citizens etc., for the promotion of the welfare of senior citizens. The Fund comprises of the unclaimed amounts transferred by every institution holding such fund in the Schemes including Small Savings and other Saving Schemes of the Central Government such as Post Office Savings Accounts, Post Office Recurring Deposits Accounts etc., Accounts of Public Provident Funds and Accounts of Employees Provident Fund, that remain unclaimed for a period of seven years from the date of the account being declared as inoperative account.

4. **National Council for Senior Citizens (NCSrC):** In pursuance of the National Policy for Older Persons (NPOP), 1999, a National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) was constituted in 1999 to oversee implementation of the Policy and to advise the Government in the formulation and implementation of policy and programmes for the aged. The National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) has been reconstituted and renamed as National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSrC) in 2012. The mandate of NCSrC is to advise Central and State Governments on the entire gamut of issues related to welfare of senior citizens and enhancement of their quality of life. The Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment, is the Chairperson of the Council.

5. **National Award 'Vayoshreshtha Samman':** Every year, this Ministry confers National Award 'Vayoshreshtha Samman' to eminent senior citizens and institutions in recognition of their contribution to the society. This is in order to showcase the Government's concern for senior citizens and its commitment towards senior citizens with the aim of strengthening their legitimate place in the society. The Vayoshreshtha Samman award started since 2005, which was upgraded to the status of National Award in 2013. The Awards are given under thirteen categories. Mementos, certificates and cash awards are presented to the awardees.

6. **Observance of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP):** On 1st October every year, this Ministry observes International Day for Older Persons by conferring National Award 'Vayoshreshtha Samman' to eminent senior citizens and institutions involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons, especially indigent senior citizens. Further, Health Camps, Inter-generational walkathons etc. are organised in different States with active participation of Senior Citizens, Youth, Celebrities and Media-persons etc.

Schemes, Programmes, Concession and Benefits for senior citizens, being provided by other Ministries/Department:

1. Ministry of Rural Development:

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ministry of Rural Development. NSAP is a social security/social welfare programme applicable to old aged, widows, disabled persons and bereaved families on death of primary bread winner, belonging to below poverty line household. Old age pension is provided under **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)** to aged persons belonging to below poverty line (BPL) household. Central assistance of Rs. 200/- per month is provided to the persons of 60-79 years of age and Rs. 500/- per month to the persons of age of 80 years or more. This Scheme is implemented by the States/UTs. Identification of beneficiaries, sanction and disbursement of benefit under the schemes is done by the States/UTs. A total of 221 lakh is the targeted beneficiaries under IGNOAPS. The Scheme is implemented in all States/ UTs in rural as well as urban areas.

2. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:

"National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly" (NPHCE) launched during 2010-11 is State oriented program with the basic thrust to provide comprehensive and dedicated health care facilities to the elderly persons above 60 year of age at various level of primary, secondary and tertiary health care.

I. Primary & Secondary Geriatric Care Services : The program commenced with 100 districts in the 11th plan period. In the 12th plan period 321 districts and in 2019-2020, 114 districts were additionally sanctioned to provide dedicated geriatric OPD, IPD, Physiotherapy and lab services. Presently all 713 Health districts have been sanctioned for geriatric primary & secondary care services of OPD, 10 bedded Geriatric Ward, Physiotherapy and laboratory services.

II. Tertiary level activities of NPHCE : were renamed as '**Rashtriya Varisth Jan Swasthya Yojana**' in 2016-17. As on date, 19 Regional Geriatric Centres (RGCs) in selected Medical Colleges of 18 States, are sanctioned for tertiary care service delivery under NPHCE in the form of specialized OPD's, 30 bedded wards in RGC including earmarking beds in various specialties like urology, orthopedics, ophthalmology etc, manpower development & research activities.

Presently OPD services are being provided through 18 RGCs, inpatient services in 16 RGC's, Physiotherapy services in 14 RGCs & laboratory services in 13 centers.

Two National Centres for Aging (NCAs) at AIIMS Delhi and MMC Chennai are in the process of development. MMC Chennai is in the advanced stage of construction while AIIMS Delhi is in the initial stage of construction. MMC Chennai is serving as Covid hospital catering to elderly covid patients also.

Daily Geriatric OPD services are being provided in 584 DH, 3111 CHCs and 10180 PHCs along with special OPDs in 18 RGCs.

Inpatient services are being provided in 507 DH, along with 16 RGCs.

Physiotherapy services are being provided in 445 DH, 1131 CHCs along with 14 RGCs.

Laboratory services are being provided in 539 DHs, 2408 CHCs, along with 13 RGCs.

Overall 61.8 lakhs elderly have been provided OPD care, 2.06 lakhs elderly admitted to indoor wards, 3.21 lakhs elderly provided Rehabilitation sessions and 21.73 lakhs elderly received Lab. Services through the various institutions operationalized for geriatric care services.

III. Training Modules: Three sets of Training modules for Medical Officers, Nurses and Community based workers to deliver Comprehensive Geriatric care has been developed. State level Training of Trainers of Medical Officers for Comprehensive Geriatric Care has been conducted at Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Haryana, Punjab Tamil Nadu & Maharashtra generating approx 236 States level Master Trainers and 85 National Master Trainers; 27 for Medical Officer Module, 26 for Staff Nurses Module and 32 for module developed to train Community based workers.

IV. IEC: Various IEC materials (Audio/Video spots on different topics of elder care, Fitness booklet, folder, posters etc.) for Geriatric care have been developed and shared with the States, who are developing the regional language versions. **NPHCE Fitness Booklet** in Hindi & English covering Nutrition in elderly, Sleep Hygiene, Medication, Exercise & Yoga, Healthy bones, Common health problems in elderly etc., **Posters** in Hindi & English on common health related issues in old age, healthy life style and Good food for good health etc. The downloadable copies of IEC material are available at www.nphce.nhp.gov.in

3. **MINISTRY OF FINANCE:**

Ministry of Finance has launched a scheme namely '**Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana**' (**PMVVY**) to provide social security during old age and to protect elderly persons aged 60 and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions. The Scheme enables old age income security for senior citizens through provision of assured pension/ return linked to the subscription amount based on Government guarantee to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

2. PMVVY is open for subscription upto 31st March 2023 and offers an assured rate of return of 7.40% per annum for the year 2020-21 for policy duration of 10 years. In subsequent years, while the Scheme is in operation full month 2023, there will be annual reset of assured rate of return with effect from April 1st of the financial year in line with applicable rate of return of Senior Citizens Saving Scheme (SCSS) upto a ceiling of 7.75% with fresh appraisal of the scheme on breach of this threshold at any point.

3. The differential return, i.e. the difference between return generated by LIC and the assured returns would be borne by Government of India as subsidy on an annual basis. Pension is payable at the end of each period during the policy tenure of 10 years as per the frequency of monthly/ quarterly/ half-yearly as chosen by the subscriber at the time of purchase. Minimum purchase price under the scheme is Rs. 1,62,162/- for a minimum pension of Rs. 1,000/- per month and the maximum purchase price is Rs. 15 lakh per senior citizen for getting a pension amount of Rs. 9,250/-.

4. The Scheme is being implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). A total number of 5,83,208 subscribers are being benefited under the scheme as on 31st December, 2020.

4. **DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION:**

Department of Food and Public Distribution allocates food grains as per requirements projected by the Ministry of Rural Development under **the Annapurna Scheme**, wherein indigent Senior Citizens, who are not getting pension under IGNOAPS, are provided 10 kg of food grains per person per month free of cost. It also implements **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)**, under which rice and wheat at a highly subsidised cost, is extended to households, headed by widows/terminally ill/disabled persons/senior citizens, with no assured means of maintenance or societal support.

5. **DEPARTMENT OF PENSION & PENSIONERS' WELFARE:**

Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare monitors and ensures that the retiring Central Government employees are granted retirement benefits including pension, so that they can live an active and dignified life after retirement.

6. **MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS:**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued two detailed **Advisories** dated 27-3-2008 and 30-8-2013 to all States Governments/UTs advising them to take immediate measures to ensure safety and security and for elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence against old persons through initiatives such as identification of senior citizens, sensitization of police personnel regarding safety, security of older persons, regular visit of the beat staff; setting up of toll free senior citizen helpline; setting up of senior citizen security cell; verification of domestic helps, drivers etc.

7. MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS:

Indian Railways have taken various measures for welfare of senior citizens, some of which are under:

1. As per rules, **male Senior Citizens of minimum 60 years and lady Senior Citizens of minimum 58 years** are granted concession in the fares of all classes of Mail/Express/Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Jan Shatabdi/Duronto group of trains. The element of concession is 40% for men and 50% for women.
2. In the computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS), there is a provision to **allot lower berths to Senior Citizens**, Female passengers of 45 years and above automatically, even if no choice is given, subject to availability of accommodation at the time of booking.
3. Accommodation is also earmarked for Senior Citizens during specified hours on suburban sections by Central and Western Railways.
4. To help old and disabled passengers requiring assistance at the stations and to strengthen the existing services, '**Yatri Mitra Sewa**' is being provided through IRCTC at major stations for enabling passengers to book wheelchair services cum porter services etc.
5. **Separate counters** are earmarked at various Passengers Reservation System (PRS) centres for dealing with the reservation requisitions received from Physically persons with disability, Senior Citizens, ex-MPS, MLAs accredited journalists and freedom fighters, if the average demand per shift not less than 120 tickets. In case there is no justification for earmarking of an exclusive counter for any of these categories of persons including persons with disability or senior citizens, one or two counters depending upon the total demand are earmarked for dealing with the reservation requests for all these categories of persons.

8. MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION:

In order to facilitate the passengers, particularly senior citizens, expectant mothers, passengers with disability, first time travellers etc., Ministry of Civil Aviation has instructed all the stakeholders to ensure that the following requirements are complied:

- Airline /airport operator shall ensure provision of **automated buggies free of charge for all senior citizens**, in the terminal building to facilitate their access to boarding gates located beyond reasonable walking distance at all airports having annual aircraft movements of 50,000 or more. This facility may be extended to other needy passengers on demand basis free of charge.
- Airport operators shall provide small trolleys after security check for carriage of hand baggage (permitted as per regulation) up to the boarding gate.

- Airport operator shall adequately display information regarding availability of automated buggies and small trolleys in the terminal building at prominent locations including dos and don'ts regarding the same. This shall also be published on the website of the airport operator.
- Further, Air India **offers 50% discount to senior citizens** on the highest economy class Basic Fare. The discount is offered to those who have completed 60 years of age on the date of commencement of journey.
- Senior citizens can also avail multi-level fares offered by Air India on each sector for travel on domestic sectors, starting from a low level advance purchase fares which facilitate early selling to the highest one.

9. MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS:

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Department of Urban Development has issued the Model Building Bye Laws, 2016 (MBBL) prescribing standards for creation of elder friendly barrier free environment with reference to buildings, toilets etc. Urban Local Bodies shall implement the Policy by adopting the Model Building Bye Laws, 2016. Further, under Urban Bus Specification-II issued in 2013, the emphasis on buses financed by the Department of Urban Development is on procurement of **low floor buses** with proper ramps for easy access of the passengers and **proper space for wheelchair** to be placed in the bus for the benefit of disabled persons and senior citizens. All metro rail projects implemented/under implementation in the country are having disabled and elder friendly infrastructure such as **proper ramps/lifts to the stations**. There is a provision for reservation of seats in metro rail coaches for differently-abled persons and senior citizens. Further, Housing for All Mission/Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Guidelines have been circulated to State/UTs to meet the demand of housing in their States/UTs, which inter alia incorporates that 'while making the allotment, families with senior citizens should be given **priority for allotment on ground floor or lower floors**'.

10. MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has constructed a **1000 bedded Old Age friendly Home for Widows**, named Krishna Kutir, at Sunrakh Bangar, Vrindavan, Distt. Mathura, Uttar Pradesh to provide them safe and secure place to stay, health services, nutritious food, legal and counseling services. The Home consists of a ground plus three floors with the facilities of ramps, lifts, supply of adequate electricity, water and other amenities for meeting the requirement of senior citizens and persons with special challenges. The Home is operational w.e.f. 01.09.2018 and managed by Govt. of Uttar Pradesh.
