

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 596
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2018**

NATIONAL POLICY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

596. SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL:

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

- (a) whether the Government has prepared/is implementing a new national policy for senior citizen in view of the changing demographic pattern, socio economic needs of the senior citizens, social value system etc.;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the aims and objectives;
- (c) if not, the time by which the said policy is likely to be implemented; and
- (d) the other measures being taken by the Government for welfare of older persons in the country?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SHRI VIJAY SAMPLA)**

(a): Yes, madam. Keeping in view the changing demographic pattern, feminisation of ageing, socio-economic needs of the senior citizens, social value system, advancement in the field of science and technology over the last decade, the existing National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) is currently under revision.

(b) & (c): The National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) has been renamed as National Policy for Senior Citizens (NPSrC). The draft NPSrC envisages mainstreaming of issues concerning senior citizens, creating an inclusive barrier-free and age-friendly environment, promoting the concept of 'Ageing in Place', providing special attention to the needs of the oldest of the old and elderly women, protecting senior citizens from neglect, abuse or exploitation, health care and support, shelter, financial independence etc. In view of the fact that the Policy encompasses various aspects of welfare of senior citizens, it would be finalised shortly.

(d): Ministries/Departments of the Central and the State Governments provide various benefits/facilities for the welfare of Senior Citizens. A list incorporating such measures taken by the Central Government is at **Annexure**.

INITIATIVES OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS

As on January 2018)

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT:

1. National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP), 1999

The existing National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) was announced in January 1999 by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 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.

Keeping in view the changing demographic pattern, feminisation of ageing, socio-economic needs of the senior citizens, social value system, advancement in the field of science and technology over the last decade, the existing National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) is currently under revision.

2. Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPC) Act, 2007 was enacted in December 2007 to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. The Act is not applicable to the State of Jammu & Kashmir, and the state of Himachal Pradesh has its own Act for Senior Citizens. The benefits of the Act extend also to senior citizens, with Indian Citizenship, staying abroad. 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, and Adequate medical facilities and security for Senior Citizens. The Act has been notified by all States and UTs. The States/ UTs which have notified the Act are required to frame Rules under Section 32; constitute Maintenance and Appellate Tribunals under Sections 7 and 15; and appoint Maintenance Officers under Section 18 under the Act.

However, amendment of the MWPC Act is under consideration in this Ministry, pursuant to the recommendation of the Group of Secretaries on Education and Social Development constituted by the Government.

3. National Council of Senior Citizens

In pursuance of the National Policy for Older Persons (NPOP), 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). 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. The Council comprises of non-official members hailing from every region of the country and has fifty percent women participation. The Council meets every year, under the chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Minister (SJ&E) to discuss upon issues relating to the welfare of senior citizens.

4. Celebration of International Day for Older Persons (IDOP)

In order to recognize the efforts made by eminent senior citizens and Institutions involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons, especially indigent senior citizens, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) has a Scheme of National Awards for senior citizens 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 Scheme of National Awards for senior citizens was notified in the Gazette of India on 22.01.2013. The awards named 'Vayoshreshtha Samman' were presented for the first time during 2013, on 1st October, on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP).

The Awards are conferred on eminent individuals and outstanding institutions or organizations including Best Institution for Research in the field of Ageing, Best Institution for providing Services to Senior Citizens and Awareness Generation, Best District Panchayat in providing Services and Facilities to Senior Citizens, Best Urban Local Body in providing Services and Facilities to Senior Citizens, Best State in Implementing the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and providing Services and Facilities to Senior Citizens, Best Private Sector Organisation in promoting the wellbeing and welfare of Senior Citizens, and Best Public Sector Organisation in promoting the wellbeing and welfare of Senior Citizens (Citation and Memento), Centenarian, Lifetime Achievement, Creative Art etc.

On 1st October every year, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment also organizes Health Camps, Inter-generational walkathons etc. in different States with active participation of Senior Citizens, Youth, Celebrities and Media-persons etc.

5. Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP)

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment runs the Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP). Under the Scheme, financial assistance up to 90% of the project cost is provided to Government/Non-Governmental Organizations/Panchayati Raj Institutions/local bodies etc. for running and maintaining old

age homes, day care centres and mobile medicare units. Some of the innovative projects under the Scheme are:

- Maintenance of Respite Care Homes and Continuous Care Homes;
- Running of Day Care Centres for Senior Citizens afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease/Dementia;
- Physiotherapy Clinics for Senior Citizens;
- Helpline and Counselling Centres for Senior Citizens including Helpline for Senior Citizens at the National and District level by the Ministry;
- Programme for Sensitisation of School/College Students;
- Regional Resource and Training Centres;
- Awareness Generation Programmes including those relating to the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007 and National Policy for Senior Citizens (NPSrC);
- Formation of Vridha Sanghas/Senior Citizens Associations/Self Help Groups.

Some of the important activities/projects supported under the Scheme are:

- Maintenance of Old Age Homes including those under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) to provide food, care and shelter for a minimum number of 25 destitute Senior Citizens.
- Maintenance of Mobile Medicare Units to provide medical care to the Senior Citizens living in rural, isolated and backward areas.
- Maintenance of Respite Care Homes and Continuous Care Homes for a minimum of 25 Senior Citizens who live in Old Age Homes but are seriously ill requiring continuous nursing care and respite.

6. Rastriya Vayoshri Yojana- A Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices for Senior Citizens belonging to BPL Category

This Scheme, started in the financial year 2016-17, aims at providing Senior Citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from any of the age related disability/infirmity viz. Low vision, Hearing impairment, Loss of teeth and Locomotor disability, with such assisted-living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions, overcoming the disability/infirmity manifested. The assistive devices shall be of high quality and conforming to the standards laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards, wherever feasible.

The National launch of the Scheme was done on 1st April 2017 at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. Till 31st January, 2018, a total of 19 camps had been held, wherein 52,512 devices have been distributed, benefiting 27368 senior citizens.

7. Senior Citizens Welfare Fund

Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund was established in 2016, for promotion of Schemes for the welfare of senior citizens, in line with the National Policy on Older Persons and the National Policy for Senior Citizens, including 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. The

Fund is administered by an Inter-Ministerial Committee with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment as the Nodal Ministry for administration of the Fund. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

Ministries/Departments of Government of India, dealing with the subject matters of senior citizens, have been requested to forward proposals for new and innovative schemes for the welfare of senior citizens.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY), a Central Sector Scheme, is funded from Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund. Under the Scheme of RVY, aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and loco-motor disabilities. The aids and assistive devices *viz.* walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quadpods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures and spectacles are provided to eligible beneficiaries.

Further, a project for extending financial assistance for procurement of 30 Electric Operated Golf Carts at 8 Airports, proposed by Ministry of Civil Aviation, has been approved under the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund.

8. National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)

The National Institute of Social Defence, an autonomous organization under this Ministry is the nodal Training and Research Institute for interventions in the area of Social Defence. The objective of the Institute is to strengthen and provide technical inputs to the social defence programmes of the Government of India and to develop and train the manpower resources required in the area of social defence. The Institute is mainly involved in conducting training programmes pertaining to care for senior citizens, drug abuse prevention and other social defence issues like beggary, transgender etc. NISD also undertakes consultations/seminars on policies and programmes in the field of social defence to anticipate and diagnose social defence problems and develop programmes for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

1. National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE), 2011:

National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, launched in 2011, aims at providing dedicated health care facilities to the elderly people through State Public Health Delivery System at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including outreach services. NPHCE is approved for implementation in 418 districts of 34 States/UTs. 2 National Centres of Ageing is under construction. 8 Regional Geriatric Centres exists and 12 under construction.

2. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana:

Under Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), health insurance is extended to BPL families. In the current year, 413 lakh BPL families have been covered in 457 districts. As a top-up to RSBY, Senior Citizens Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS) is extended to exclusively cover senior citizens of BPL families.

3. Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI):

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India in 2016 to assess health status of the elderly in the country. This is the largest survey of its kind, including survey of more than 60,000 elderly over 25 years plan. This survey will provide scientifically validated data on various issues of the elderly.

4. Separate queue:

Provision for separate queues for senior citizens is observed in Hospitals for all purposes.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

1. Financial Concessions and Benefits to senior citizens:

Ministry of Finance provides higher Income-tax exemption for senior citizens for deposits under Senior Citizen Saving Scheme; income-tax exemption for younger generation for payment of health insurance premium for parents who are senior citizens.

2. Varisht Pension Bima Yojana:

Department of Financial Services implements Varisht Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY)-2003 and 2014, which are social security scheme for senior citizens, intended to give an assured minimum pension to them based on guaranteed minimum return on the subscription amount. The pension is intended to give an assured minimum pension based on guaranteed minimum return on the subscription amount. The pension is envisaged until death from the date of subscription or upto 15 years whichever is earlier with payback of the subscription amount on death of the subscriber to the nominee or after 15 years to the subscriber on surrender of policy. These Schemes are implemented through Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India. As on 31.03.2016, a total number of 2,84,699 beneficiaries and 3,17,991 beneficiaries under being benefitted under VPBY 2003 and 2014 respectively. A new Scheme, 'Pradhan Mantri Vayovandana Yojana' has been launched in 2017 which will be open for one year. This Scheme is also being implemented through LIC of India.

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):

Under the Scheme of IGNOAPS, old age pension of Rs. 200/- per month is provided to persons of age group 60-79 years and Rs. 500/- per month to persons of age group 80 years

and above. The State Government contributes certain amount over and above the Central assistance. In the current year, approx. 200 lakh senior citizens have been its beneficiaries.

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

1. Annapurna Scheme:

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.

2. Antyodaya Anna Yojana:

Department of Food and Public Distribution 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.

MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

1. Financial Assistance to handicrafts awardee artisans above 60 years of age:

Ministry of Textiles has a Scheme under which a monthly support of Rs. 3,500/- per month is given to such handicrafts awardee artisans above 60 years of age and have an annual income of less than Rs. 50,000/-.

DEPARTMENT OF PENSION & PENSIONERS' WELFARE

1. Retirement Benefits for retired Central Government employees:

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.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

1. Advisories issued to ensure Individual Safety and Security:

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.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1. Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan:

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) in 2015 as a nation-wide Campaign for achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) aims to enable persons with disabilities to gain universal access, equal opportunity for development, independent living and participation in an inclusive society in all aspects of life. This includes creation of elder friendly barrier free environment in buildings, public toilets, buses, bus-stands, airports and other public places to create age-friendly cities.

MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Standards for Barrier-free Environment:

The Ministry of Urban Development has issued 'Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for persons with Disability and Elderly Persons' in 2016. These Guidelines intend to address the needs of persons with disabilities and elderly persons with a wide range of accessibility elements and standards and not limited to disabilities only, thus paving the way for universally accessible and inclusive India. Further, under Urban Bus Specification-II issued in 2013, the emphasis on buses financed by the Ministry of Urban Development is on procurement of low floor buses with proper ramps for easy access of the passengers and proper space for wheel chair to be placed in the bus for the benefit of disabled persons and senior citizens.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING & URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION

1. Allotment of Ground Floor Dwelling Unit:

Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation has launched 'Housing for All (Urban) Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' in 2015. The Mission Guidelines have been circulated to State/UTs to meet the demand of housing in their States/UTs, specifying that preference in allotment of dwelling units may be given to senior citizens and while making the allotment, the families with senior citizens may be allotted house preferably on ground floor or lower floors.

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

1. Reservation of seats and concession in fare:

- As per rules, male Senior Citizens of minimum 60 years and lady Senior Citizens of minimum 58 years are granted concession in the basic 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. No proof of age is required at the time of purchasing tickets. However, they are required to carry some documentary proof as

prescribed showing their age or date of birth and have to produce it if demanded by on-board ticket checking staff. Senior Citizens can book reserve tickets across the reservation counters as well as through internet.

- 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.
- In all trains having reserved accommodation, a combined quota of two lower berths per coach has been earmarked in sleeper, A/C 3 tier and A/C 2 tier classes for the Senior Citizens, Female passengers aged 45 years above and pregnant women when travelling alone.
- Accommodation is also earmarked for Senior Citizens during specified hours on suburban sections by Central and Western Railways.
- Instructions exist for provisions of wheel chairs at stations. This facility is provided, duly escorted by coolies on payment as per present practice. Moreover, Zonal Railways have also been advised to provide free of cost 'Battery Operated Vehicles for Disabled and Old Aged passengers' at Railway Stations.
- After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train and if any physically handicapped person booked on the authority of handicapped concession or a senior citizen, who has been allotted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the on-board Ticket Checking Staff has been authorised to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the chart.

2. Separate queues for senior citizens:

Separate counters are earmarked at various Passengers Reservation System (PRS) centres for dealing with the reservation requisitions received from physically handicapped persons, 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 handicapped persons 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.

3. Reservation of seats in Metro Rail:

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, level boarding the alighting of passengers etc. There is a provision of reservation of seats in metro rail coaches for the differently abled persons and senior citizens.

MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

1. Concession of Fare:

- 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.
