

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 186  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2021**

**EMPOWERMENT OF SENIOR CITIZENS**

**186. SHRI S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN:**

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

(a) the measures taken/to be taken by the Government to tackle the various problems that aged people have to experience viz., decline in health conditions, retirement, financial problems, loneliness and dependence upon others considering the fact that the number of elderly in India is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026, which is roughly, 18 crore by the next seven years; and

(b) the measures and policies implemented by the Government to alleviate the problems of the aged people, which includes, improving the economic and social welfare, improving the health conditions, improving their participation in activities and functions etc.?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)**

(a) & (b): A statement is laid out at **Annexure A**.

MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR THE WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:

1. Government of India, through Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, announced **the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) 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** was 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.
3. 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 Homecare 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.
4. The **National Action Plan for the Welfare of Senior Citizens (NAPSrC)** is an umbrella scheme, effective since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, 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. It includes 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.

5. Further, this Ministry has launched the '**Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)**' on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017 with an objective to provide senior citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, with such physical aids and assisted living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions. Under the Scheme, assisted living devices such as 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. The Scheme is being implemented by the "Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)", a Public Sector Undertaking under this Ministry. The devices are distributed in the camp mode to the identified beneficiaries. The Scheme is being funded from Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF).

6. 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.

7. 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) 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.

8. 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 started celebrating International Day of Older Persons (IDOP), since 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2005, giving '**Vayoshreshtha Samman**' in recognition to their contribution to the society. Further, 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 was upgraded to **National Award** and the Scheme of National Awards for Senior Citizens was notified in the Gazette of India on 22.01.2013. The Awards are given under thirteen categories. The National Awards were presented for the first time during 2013, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). On 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

#### **Ministry of Rural Development:**

9. 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.

#### **Department of Food and Public Distribution**

10. 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.

#### **Ministry of Finance:**

11. 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).



PMVVY is open for subscription upto 31<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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/-.

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

#### **Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare**

12. 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**

13. 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.

#### **Ministry of Railways:**

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

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.

- iii. Accommodation is also earmarked for Senior Citizens during specified hours on **suburban sections** by Central and Western Railways.
- iv. 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.
- v. **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.

#### **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:**

15. Government of India has been implementing **National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE)** from the F.Y. 2010-11 to provide dedicated healthcare services to the elderly people at various level of state health care delivery system at primary, secondary and tertiary health care including outreach services. The Programme has two components with the following provisions to provide health care facilities to the elderly people in the country:-

(1) **National Health Mission (NHM) component:** The district and below activities of the programme is being covered under Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) flexible pool of NHM which are as follows: (1) Geriatric OPD and 10 bedded Geriatric Ward at District Hospitals, (2) Bi-weekly Geriatric Clinic at Community Health Centres (CHCs), (3) Weekly Geriatric Clinic at Primary Health Centre (PHCs), and (4) Provision of Aids and Appliances at Sub-centres. The programme is being implemented on the basis of Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) submitted by the States/UTs and viability under the provisions of NPHCE.

(2) **Tertiary Component:** In addition to NHM component of the programme, to ensure appropriate referral for conditions not amenable to be treated at primary and secondary level to create human resource orientated towards geriatric care, this Ministry is supporting development of Regional Geriatric Centres (RGCs) with and establishment of 02 National Centres of Ageing each at AIIMS, New Delhi and MMC, Chennai with the following geriatric health care facilities – (1) Geriatric OPD, 30 bedded Geriatric ward for in-patient care @ RGCs and 200 bedded Geriatric ward @ NCAs, (2) 02 PG seats per RGC and 15 PG seats per NCA in Geriatric Medicine, and (3) Research activities, Imparting Training and Development of training material.

16. The **Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) Project** was launched in 2016 to assess the health, economic and social status of the elderly (age 45-60). LASI project is being conducted by International Institute for Population Sciences, IIPS, (Deemed University), Mumbai which is an autonomous organization under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

17. During 2018-19, Government approved the launch of **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)** to cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families, providing coverage upto Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization. With the launch of the PMJAY, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS) will be subsumed in it. All enrolled beneficiary families of RSBY and SCHIS are entitled for benefits under PMJAY.



### Ministry of Communications:

18. **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)**, under Ministry of Communications, has reported that Senior Citizens of the age of 65 years and above are exempted from payment of registration charges for Landline Telephone Connection. Further, **Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (MTNL)** provides concession of 25% in installation/activation charges and monthly services/rental charges for Landline connections under Plan-250 to Senior Citizens above 65 years of age.

### Ministry of Civil Aviation:

19. 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.

### Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs:

20. 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 wheel chair 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 interalia incorporates that 'while making the allotment, families with senior citizens should be given **priority for allotment on ground floor or lower floors**'.

### Ministry of Women and Child Development:

21. 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.

**Ministry of AYUSH:**

22. Ministry of AYUSH provides free consultation, yoga therapy and yoga training under Yoga and Naturopathy and runs OPDs in various Government Hospital across the country.

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