

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.300  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2025**

**SENIOR CITIZENS AND DIVYANGJANS**

**300. DR. KIRSAN NAMDEO:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken any steps to ensure that senior citizens and divyangjans have access to essential services, financial support and protective measures, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the extent to which the Government addresses the unique challenges and needs of the aging population and divyangjans;
- (c) whether the Government is making education and employment more accessible for people with disabilities;
- (d) if so, the details of schemes for making education and employment more accessible for people with disabilities; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to raise awareness about disability rights?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
(SHRI B.L.VERMA)**

(a) to (b): The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, implements Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) Scheme for the welfare of senior citizens. The Scheme has following seven components:-

- i. **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizen(IPSrC)** – Grant-in-aid is provided to Non-Governmental/ Voluntary Organisations for running and maintenance of Senior Citizen Homes (old age homes), Continuous Care Homes, etc. Facilities like shelter, nutrition, medicare and entertainments are provided free of cost to indigent senior citizens.
- ii. **State Action Plan for Senior Citizen(SAPSrC)**- Under State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC), the State Government implements the State Action Plan for welfare of senior citizens. Grant-in-aid is provided to States/ UTs for activities like awareness generation, sensitization, cataract surgeries and State specific activities.
- iii. **Elderline** - The National Helpline on Toll free number 14567 namely 'Elderline' was launched on date 01.10.2021 for grievance redressal of Senior Citizens and to generate awareness about the Act, schemes & programmes being executed by Central & State Governments.

- iv. **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana(RVY)** - The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the scheme component of 'Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)' with the objective to provide to senior citizens, with the monthly income of not more than Rs. 15000/- and suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, with such physical aids and assisted living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions. The scheme was launched on 01.04.2017. The Scheme is implemented through the 'Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)', (a Central Public Sector Undertaking under the M/oSJE) as the sole implementing Agency.
- v. **Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine(SAGE)** - SAGE scheme Component is to promote out-of-the-box and innovative solutions for the commonly faced problems. Under this scheme component, innovative start-ups are identified and encouraged for developing products, processes and services for the welfare of the elderly. The selection of the start-ups is made through a transparent process and the funds are provided as equity, subject to the Government investment not exceeding 49% of the total equity of the Firm.
- vi. **Training of Geriatric Caregivers** - The main objective of this scheme component is to bridge the gap in supply and increasing demand in the field of geriatric caregivers so as to provide more professional services to the senior citizens and also to create a cadre of professional care givers in the field of geriatrics.
- vii. **Other Initiatives for Senior Citizens:** In order to solve the problems of healthy and productive ageing, several initiatives are implemented across the country.

Further, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has notified The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 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.

To empower Divyangjans, the Right of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 has been enacted which came into force on 19.04.2017. Section 45 of RPwD Act, 2016 provides time limit for making existing infrastructure and premises accessible and action for that purpose. Section 24 mandates the appropriate Government, within the limit of economic capacity, to provide disability pension subject to income ceiling. Sections 6 and 7 provides for measures to protect persons with disabilities from cruelty, inhuman treatment, abuse, violence and inhuman treatment.

Furthermore, Section 40 of RPwD Act mandates accessibility standards for the physical environment, transportation, information, communication technologies, and other essential services in both urban and rural areas. Section 16 requires educational institutions to make their buildings, campuses, and facilities accessible. Section 11 ensures accessibility in voting, enabling persons with disabilities to exercise their electoral rights without barriers. Additionally, Section 19 provides financial support by offering loans at concessional rates to facilitate employment, vocational training, and self-employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments through various schemes and programmes. Some of the major schemes are as follows:

i. **‘Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP):** Funds are released to various Implementing Agencies to assist the eligible persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) including school-going students in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhancing their economic potential throughout the country.

ii. **Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA):** Assistance is provided to State Governments and to autonomous organizations/Institutions under Central or State Governments, for various activities relating to implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, particularly for creation of barrier free environment, accessible india campaign and skill development of PwDs.

iii. **Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS):** Financial assistance is provided to the voluntary organizations for running various projects for the welfare/empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) including Special School for the Children with Visual, Hearing and Intellectual disability including Children with Cerebral Palsy etc., aimed at enabling them to maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or social functional levels.

iv. **National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC):** It channelizes concessional loans for the socio-economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) including visually impaired persons throughout the country. There are two flagship schemes of NDFDC for channelizing concessional finance through its partner agencies i.e. (a) Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana (DSY) & (b) Vishesh Microfinance Yojana (VMY).

v. Scholarship Scheme under which Government provides scholarships to students with disabilities.

(c) to (d): To make education more accessible, the Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education Institutions and Universities and Accessibility Code for Educational Institutions formulated by the Department of Higher Education and Accessibility Code for Educational Institutions by Dept. of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education respectively have been notified under the RPwD Rules, 2017.

Further, Department of School Education & Literacy has launched an overarching programme for the school education sector- Samagra Shiksha Scheme. Under Samagra Siksha, there is a dedicated component for Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (IE for CwSN), to ensure full equity and inclusion such that all children with special needs are able to fully participate in schools. The scheme aims to look at education for CwSN in a continuum from pre-school to class XII. The Samagra Shiksha Scheme is being implemented through State Governments/ UT administrations and the Central Government provides necessary financial support for the same.

Through the inclusive education for CwSN component, various provisions are made available for CwSN such as identification and assessment camps (at block level), student specific interventions @ Rs. 3500/- per CwSN per annum for support, such as provision of aids, appliances, assistive devices, teaching-learning material, Braille books, large print with severe & multiple disabilities who are unable to attend school. The focus of Samagra Siksha is on providing inclusive education to CwSN, wherein children regardless of their abilities/disabilities participate and learn together in the same class, thus creating an equitable enabling educational environment for all students.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is implementing a Umbrella Scheme titled 'Scholarships for Students with Disabilities (Divyangjan)' which comprises six components viz;

- Pre-matric (Classes IX & X),
- Post-matric (Classes XI to Post graduate Degree and Diploma),
- Top Class Education (Graduate and Post graduate Degree/Diploma in notified institutes of excellence in education),
- National Overseas Scholarship (Masters Degree/ Ph.D in Foreign Universities),
- National Fellowship for PWDs (M Phil and Ph.D in Indian Universities); and
- Free Coaching (for competitive exams for group A,B and C posts and entrance examinations for admission to technical and professional courses).

Further, Section 16(ii) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates the appropriate Government and local authorities to make building, campus and various facilities accessible for the purpose of providing inclusive education to children with disabilities. Section 17(i) provides for making suitable modification in the curriculum and examination system, by way of provisioning extra time for completion of examination paper and exemption from second and third language courses to meet the needs of students with disabilities. CBSE being sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities provides several exemptions/concessions to CwSN including deaf and dumb as defined in RPwD Act, 2016 such as issuing authority of medical certificate, facility of scribe and compensatory time, appointment of scribe and related instructions, fee and special exemptions for class X like exemption from third language, flexibility in choosing subjects, alternate questions/separate questions and special exemptions for class XII like flexibility in choosing subjects, separate question paper and questions in lieu of practical component.

Furthermore; To enhance skills of Persons with Disabilities and to enable them to have gainful employment towards making them self-reliant, productive and contributory members of society, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is implementing the National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (NAP-SDP) for Persons with disabilities in the age group of 15 to 59 years, through various Government and Non-Government Organizations.

Department launched PM-DAKSH Portal-DEPwD for effective implementation of National Action Plan for Skill Development of PwDs (NAP-SDP) which also caters to need of PwDs for skilling and employment by providing a platform to Employers/job aggregators.

In pursuance of RPwD Act, 2016, Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) has issued detailed instructions regarding reservation for Persons with Benchmark Disability in direct recruitment and promotions in posts and services vide OM dated 15.1.2018 and 17.5.2022, respectively. Further, the benefit of reservation in promotions to Persons with benchmark Disability has been extended from 30.06.2016 onwards vide OM dated 28.12.2023. As per the instructions issued by DoPT, each Ministry/Department is required to designate an officer, at least of the rank of Deputy Secretary, as Liaison Officer for Persons with Benchmark Disability to ensure implementation of these instructions. Further, in order to enable such candidates to effectively discharge their duties, detailed guidelines have been issued advising the Ministries/Departments to extend additional facilities/amenities to them such as post recruitment and pre-promotion training, assistive devices, preference in transfer/posting, special casual leave, etc. instructions regarding exemption from the routine exercise of transfer/rotational transfer has also been extended to those employees, who are caregiver of Persons with Disability dependents.

(e): The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) is implementing "Awareness Generation & Publicity Scheme" as one of the component under SIPDA Scheme across the country. The main objective of the scheme is creation of general awareness about the schemes and programmes of the Government for the welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and to train and sensitize key functionaries of the Central/State Government/Local Bodies and other service providers on a regular basis on disability related matters through State/District/Block level workshops with the aim to raise awareness among employees and peer groups about capabilities of PwDs. Widespread awareness has been done through print, electronic, digital, and social media platforms.

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