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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2022-23)**

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2023-24)**

FORTY FIFTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2023/Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 23.3.2023

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23.3.2023



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2023/Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2022-23)**

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Deepak (Dev) Adhikari
3. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
4. Shri Bholanath (B.P. Saroj)
5. Smt. Pramila Bisoyi
6. Shri Thomas Chazhikadan
7. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
8. Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
9. Shri Hans Raj Hans
10. Shri Abdul Khaleque
11. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
12. Smt. Geeta Kora
13. Shri Vijay Kumar
14. Shri Akshaibar Lal
15. Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann
16. Shri V. Sreenivasa Prasad
17. Smt. Supriya Sadanand Sule
18. Shri K. Shanmuga Sundaram
19. Smt. Rekha Arun Verma
20. Shri Devendrappa Y.
21. Shri Tokheho Yepthomi

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
23. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
24. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
25. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
26. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
27. Shri Naryana Koragappa
28. Smt. Mamata Mohanta
29. Shri Ramji
30. Shri Anthiyur P. Selvarasu
31. Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita Bhatt Panda Additional Secretary
2. Shri Ved Prakash Nauriyal Joint Secretary
3. Smt. Mamta Kemwal Director
4. Smt. Banani Sarker Joshi Under Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2022-23) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Forty-Fifth Report on 'Demands for Grants for the year 2023-24' pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

2. The Committee considered the 'Demands for Grants (2023-24)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) which were laid on the Table of the House on 10th February, 2023. After obtaining their Budget related Documents and Explanatory Notes, the Committee took evidence of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) on 16th February, 2023. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at the sitting held on 22nd March, 2023.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) for appearing before them and furnishing information in connection with the examination of the 'Demands for Grants (2023-24)'.

4. For ease of reference, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold in the body of the Report.

New Delhi
22nd March, 2023
1 Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)

SMT. RAMA DEVI
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Social
Justice and Empowerment

REPORT

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTORY

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities was created to give focused attention to policy issues and meaningful thrust to the activities aimed at welfare and empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). It is the nodal agency for matters pertaining to disability and persons with disabilities and entrusted with effecting closer coordination among different stakeholders, related Central Ministries, State/UT Governments, NGOs etc. in matters pertaining to disability in India.

1.2 A "person with disability" (also called Divyangjan) has been defined under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 as someone having long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others. A "person with benchmark disability" means a person with not less than 40 percent of a specified disability as certified by the certifying authority. As per census 2011, there are 2.68 crore or 2.21 percent of the total population of the Country suffer from one or the other kind of disability. However, the number could be much more because many more disabilities were added after the enactment of RPWD Act, 2016 yet, till the Census 2021 gets completed, the official complete figures of persons suffering from the disabilities added later, are not available so far. Meanwhile the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) conducted the NSS in 2018. The National Sample Survey (NSS) in its 76th Round in July-December, 2018, reported overall disabled population as 2.2%.

1.3 The main objectives of the Department are enumerated as under:-

- (i) Physical rehabilitation, which includes early detection and intervention, counseling and medical rehabilitation and assistance in procuring appropriate aids and appliances for reducing the effect of disabilities;
- (ii) Educational rehabilitation including vocational education;

- (iii) Economic rehabilitation and social empowerment;
- (iv) Developing rehabilitation professionals/personnel;
- (v) Improving internal efficiency/responsiveness/service delivery; and
- (vi) Advocating empowerment of persons with disabilities through awareness generation among different sections of the society.

1.4 Some of the important Acts enacted by the Government of India for the welfare of persons with disabilities and implemented by the Department are as under: -

- i. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992,
- ii. The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999; and
- iii. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act 2016)

1.5 The office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) was established to review the safeguards provided by or under the RPwD Act 2016 or any other law for the time being in force for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend measures for their effective implementation, review the factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend appropriate remedial measures. The Office of the CCPD also takes suo motu notices of non-implementation of various provisions of the Act such as reservation in employment, admission, instances of discrimination against PwDs reported in the press, media and take up with concerned authorities. The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been assigned certain powers of a Civil Court for effective discharge of the functions and proceedings before the Chief Commissioner shall be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code and the Chief Commissioner shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of section 195 and Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

1.6 When asked about the vacancy position in the offices of the statutory bodies under the Department *viz.* The Rehabilitation Council of India, The National Trust and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. The Secretary stated before the Committee as under:-

"मैडम, आज की तारीख में तीनों पद रिक्त हैं।लेकिन तीनों पदों को भरने के लिए प्रॉसेस ऑन है।सी सी पी डी के एप्लिकेशंस आ चुके हैं, इसकी शॉर्ट लिस्टिंग हो चुकी है।तीन या चार अप्रैल को इंटरव्यू फिक्स हो गई है।नैशनल ट्रस्ट के चेयरमैन पद के लिए भी विज्ञापन निकला हुआ है।उसका लास्ट डेट पाँच-सात दिनों में समाप्त होने वाला है।आर सी आ ईचेयरमैन के पद के लिए भी शॉर्ट लिस्टिंग हो गई है।इसके लिए 11 एप्लिकेशंस आये हुए हैं।अप्रैल के पहले सप्ताह में हमने इंटरव्यू फिक्स कर दिया है।इसलिए हमें उम्मीद है कि अप्रैल के अंत तक हम तीनों प्रस्ताव डी ओ पी टी को भेज देंगे।उसके बाद फाइनल मान्यता ए सी सी से आती है।लेकिन हमारी जेन्यून कोशिश है कि अप्रैल के अंततक सिलेक्शन की प्रक्रिया पूरी करके नामों के साथ ए सी सी को प्रस्ताव चला जाए।"

1.7 Disability in India is today largely guided by the provisions laid down under the RPwD Act 2016 which has been brought into force from April 19, 2017. The Act identifies various specified disabilities which have been broadly classified into five categories as under:-

Types of disabilities	Components
Physical Disability:	(i) Locomotor Disability including Leprosy cured person ,Cerebral Palsy, Dwarfism, Muscular Dystrophy Acid attack victims (ii) Visual Impairment (only Blindness and Low Vision) (iii) Hearing Impairment (only Deaf and Hard of Hearing) (iv) Speech and Language Disability
Intellectual Disability	Specific Learning Disability Autism Spectrum Disorder Mental Behavior (Mental Illness)
Disability caused due to	Chronic Neurological Conditions such as Parkinson's disease and Multiple Sclerosis
Blood Disorder	Hemophilia, Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease
Multiple Disabilities	

Statistical Outline of population of Persons with Disabilities in India

1.8 The Registrar General of India has initiated the process for Census, 2021 and they are revising the criteria for capturing the data on all the twenty-one categories of

persons with disabilities included in the RPwD Act, 2016 in Census, 2021. The Department has given its views to the Registrar General of India (RGI) in this regard. While the country awaits the commencement of the 2021 census which has been delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Department is largely dependent on the Census 2011 figures for details of number of persons with disabilities. The details of the total number of persons and the those of their numbers by type of disability, as per Census 2011 are given below: -

Type of Disability	Persons	Males	Females
In Seeing	50,33,431	26,39,028	23,94,403
In Hearing	50,72,914	26,78,584	23,94,330
In Speech	19,98,692	11,22,987	8,75,705
In Movement	54,36,826	33,70,501	20,66,325
Mental Retardation	15,05,964	8,70,898	6,35,066
Mental Illness	7,22,880	4,15,758	3,07,122
Any Other	49,27,589	27,28,125	21,99,464
Multiple Disability	21,16,698	11,62,712	9,53,986
Total	2,68,14,994	1,49,885,93 (55.89%)	1,18,264,01 (44.11%)

1.9 The classification of Persons with Disabilities by Residential Area is asunder:-

Population of Persons with Disabilities by Residence India, 2011			
Residence	Persons	Males	Females
Urban	81, 78,636 (30.51%)	45,78,034	36,00,602
Rural	1,86,31,921 (69.49%)	1,04,08,168	82,23,753
Total	2,68,10,557	1,49,86,202	1,18,24,355

1.10 The educational level of Persons with Disabilities is as under:-

Educational Level	Persons	Males	Females
Illiterate	1,21,96,641	56,40,240	65,56,401
Literate	1,46,18,353	9,34,835	52,70,000
(i) Literate but below Primary	28,40,345	17,06,441	11,33,904
(ii) Primary but below middle	35,54,858	21,95,933	13,58,925
(iii) Middle but below Matric/Secondary	24,48,070	16,16,539	8,31,531
(iv) Matric/Secondary but below Graduate	34,48,650	23,30,080	11,18,570

(v) Graduate and above	12,46,857	8,39,702	4,07,155
Total	2,68,14,994	1,49,88,593	1,18,26,401

1.11 Regarding the working status of the Persons with Disabilities, it has been informed that as per Census, 2011, about 36% of the persons with disabilities are working. While 47% of disabled male persons are engaged in employment, the corresponding number for females is only 23%. Among the workers with disabilities, 31% constitute agricultural laborers. While 50% of the PwD population in the age group of 15-59 years are working around 4% of children with disabilities in the age group below 14 years are engaged in work. The State-wise data of persons with disabilities as per the census 2011 as follows:-

S.No.	State	Total disabled population as per Census 2011
1	Andhra Pradesh	1219785
2	Arunachal Pradesh	26,734
3	Assam	4,80,065
4	Bihar	23,31,009
5	Chhattisgarh	6,24,937
6	Delhi	2,34,882
7	Goa	33,012
8	Gujarat	10,92,302
9	Haryana	5,46,374
10	Himachal Pradesh	1,55,316
11	J&K	3,61,153
12	Jharkhand	7,69,980
13	Karnataka	13,24,205
14	Kerala	7,61,843
15	Madhya Pradesh	15,51,931
16	Maharashtra	29,63,392
17	Manipur	58,547
18	Mizoram	15,160
19	Meghalaya	44,317
20	Nagaland	29,631
21	Odisha	12,44,402
22	Punjab	6,54,063
23	Rajasthan	15,63,694
24	Sikkim	18,187
25	Tamil Nadu	11,79,963
26	Telangana	10,46,822
27	Tripura	64,346

28	Uttar Pradesh	41,57,514
29	Uttarakhand	1,85,272
30	West Bengal	20,17,406
31	A&N Islands	6,660
32	Chandigarh	14,796
33	Daman & Diu	2,196
34	D& N Haveli	3,294
35	Lakshadweep	1,615
36	Puducherry	30,189
	Total	2,68,14,994

1.12 The Committee pointed out that number of persons with disabilities in India which is pegged at 2.68 cr is based on the 2011 census. This data is more than 11 years old and with greater number of disabilities being brought under the ambit of the RPwD Act, 2016, this number is in all probability not an actual reflection of the actual number of persons with disabilities in the country. They wanted to know how does the Department factor in the increase in the growth of the population of PwDs for allocations and determining physical targets. In a written reply the Department have stated that DEPwD's Schemes have been framed based on 2011 PwD census with a built-in flexibility to accommodate the add-on PwD population. It has also been stated that over the years, the beneficiaries base of Schemes have expanded with the Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) of DDRS & DDRC further adding the number of beneficiaries.

1.13 The Secretary, appearing before the Committee admitted

"2011 के सेंसस में 2.21 परसेंट पापुलेशन में 2.68 करोड़ दिव्यांग थे। डब्ल्यू एच ओ के एस्टीमेट्स में हैं कि 5 से 10 प्रतिशत लोग दिव्यांग कैटेगिरी में आते हैं। जैसे आपने बताया कि नया एक्ट आया और सात डिसेबिलिटीज को बढ़ाकर 21 कर दिया गया। वर्ष 2021 का सेंसस होगा, यह संख्या काफी बढ़ सकती है।"

1.14 The Committee undertook a detailed scrutiny of the Demands for Grants of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2023-24 as well as the financial performance and utilization of budget in the last two years. During the presentation made by the representatives of the Department and during interactions

with them in the Committee meetings, a large number of issues which impinges on the lives of number of persons with disabilities came to the fore. The written replies provided to the Committee by the Department also brought into sharper focus the content and contours, besides the extent, of these issues. The Committee deliberated on these matters extensively, in the context of the Demands for Grants and attainment of the rights advocated under the landmark legislation -Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

1.15 To a query on the imposition of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on aids and appliances used by PwDs, the Secretary DEPwD deposed before the Committee as under:

“हमने बजट से पहले वित्त मंत्रालय को प्रस्ताव भेजा था कि उन पर से पूरी तरह से जी एस टी हटा दिया जाए। शायद, हम इसके बाद जी एस टी काउंसिल को भी प्रस्ताव भेजेंगे।”

1.16 The Committee note that the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have an enormous social responsibility on their shoulders, and a national obligation as well, to mainstream disability, remove stigma and negative stereotyping and laying the foundation of a truly inclusive society through their schemes and initiatives, and contribute directly and indirectly to the nation's welfare. The Committee further note that as a signatory to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (CRPD), India has enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which seeks to empower persons with disabilities to live independently and with dignity. While the Government of India aims to create an inclusive society for persons with disabilities yet there are numerous hurdles faced in this regard such as lack of economic opportunities, lower educational achievements, poorer health, and higher rates of poverty. The Committee are however of the opinion that the biggest stumbling block would be the high prevalence of social stigma attached to disability. They are of the opinion that persons with impairments become

'disabled' only when the society denies them an enabling environment that gives them a chance to lead a dignified life. The Committee understand that there are many historical and other factors responsible for their predicament, nonetheless, they are convinced that with earmarking of adequate funds alongwith perspective planning, proactive leadership and prudent and judicious management of the allocations, a truly inclusive society can be evolved.

1.17 The Committee note that since the work of Census 2021 was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department are dependent on data generated by Census 2011. According to Census 2011 data there are 2.68 persons with disabilities which accounts for more than 2.21 % of the total population. As the next Census (2021) is yet to be completed and results reported, the actual figures of persons suffering from the disabilities added after the Act of 2016 will be available in an year or two. In this connection, the Committee would like the Department to utilize all available data to arrive at the best estimation so that such persons are identified and brought into the ambit of the welfare schemes for Divyangjan. While the National Sample Survey (76th Round) has issued some sampled estimates of disabled persons, the focus is on counting only the people with bench mark disabilities and as per experts captures only a part of the population. The Committee therefore urge the Department to find an alternate way to include all the disabled persons, as much as possible in their welfare schemes till the Census figures come, particularly since most of these Divyangjan suffer from either mental or intellectual disability. The Committee also urge the Department to emphasize upon the disability surveyors conducting the NSS of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to consult disability experts while any survey is being designed, extensively train and sensitize surveyors on types of disabilities to include all the categories of disability that are covered in the Act of 2016 which is the ultimate aim of the legislation.

1.18 The Committee have come to know that aids and appliances used by PwDs attract 5 percent charge under the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Committee believe that aids and appliances are critical for persons with disabilities to pursue independence, literacy and employment with dignity. While taking cognizance of the fact that the Department was taking up this issue with the GST Council at the highest level, the Committee wish to emphasise that being a social welfare department attending to the most marginalized section of the society, the Department, should endeavour to have these items declared tax free. They therefore desire the Department to pursue this matter for reaching a favourable conclusion that would make aids and appliances more affordable to the persons with disabilities in India.

CHAPTER-II

BUDGET ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE

Proposals and Allocations for 2023-24

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment presented their detailed Demands for Grants (Demand No. 94) for the financial year 2023-24 to Parliament on 09th February, 2023. The BE of the Department of Empowerment of PwDs for the financial year is ₹1225.15 crore. The details are as under:-

(₹in Crore)

Establishment Expenditure	42.72
Allocation Under Schemes Head	680.00
Allocation under non Schemes Head	502.43
Total	1225.15

As enquired, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) furnished the following statement showing the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure for the previous years along with the Budget Estimates for the year 2023-24:-

(₹. in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure
2019-20	1204.90	1100	1016.18
2020-21	1325.39	900	861.63
2021-22	1171.77	1044.31	1009.45
2022-23	1212.42	1015.98	612.73 (upto13.2.2023)
2023-24	1225.15		

2.2 The Committee desired to know the details of the proposed amount by the Department for the year 2023-24. In response, the Department have submitted that:-

“an amount of ₹ 1239.65 crore had been projected to the Ministry of Finance for the financial year 2023-24 with the objective of maintaining momentum of the ongoing activities and also to initiate new activities as approved by the Cabinet. Enhanced allocation was requested under the Schemes of Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase of fitting devices (ADIP), National Institutes (NIs), SIPDA, Establishment of Centre for Disability Sports at Shillong, Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme, Scholarship Schemes and for construction of new buildings in the National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres”.

2.3 On being asked about the reasons for the reduction by the Ministry of Finance from the proposed BE of ₹1,239.65 crore to ₹1,225.15 crore, the DEPwD submitted that:-

“The BE 2023-24 in respect of the allocations towards Central Sector Schemes namely ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS and Scholarship were recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in their meeting held on 11.08.2021 for continuation of next five years. All the four schemes are appraised and approved with financial allocation and physical targets for the entire period of the 15th Finance Commission’s recommendations. Therefore, the CS Schemes allocation is done as per the approved EFC.” However, the Department sought to assure the Committee that additional allocation is made for National Institutes and Centre for Disability under the non-schemes plan of the Department.

2.4 When asked whether this reduction would negatively impact the schemes being implemented by the Department, it was submitted that:-

“Allocations made in BE 2023-24 were sufficient to meet the requirement of the year.” The Committee were assured that in case of additional requirement of funds, the additional demand for grants would be raised at the RE stage.

2.5 The total Plan outlay for the year 2023-24 has been increased to ₹1,225.15 crore from the RE 2022-23 of ₹1,015.98 crore (17 percent approximately). Asked to state the measures taken/proposed for optimal utilization of the total allocation of ₹1,225.15 crore during 2023-24, the Department deposited before the Committee as under:

“पिछले 3-4 साल में जो बजट प्रावधान होता था, फाइनली खर्चा थोड़ा कम होता था, इसमें अब हम पूरा फुट प्रिंट एक्सपेंड कर रहे हैं। एलिम्को के सेंटर बढ़ा रहे हैं। कई सी आर सी में भी एलिम्को सैटअप कर रहा है, कई डी डी आर सी में जाकर करेगा। सी आर सी की संख्या हम बढ़ा रहे हैं। हम चाहते हैं कि अगले दो साल में हर राज्य और यूटी में हमारा सी आर सी हो जाए। डी डी आर एस और डी डी आर सी की संख्या भी बढ़ा रहे हैं। जैसा आपने कहा कि वर्ष 2023 में जो बजट है, पिछले साल के मुकाबले उसमें बिल्कुल ही 1 या 2 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि है। इस बार हम कॉफी कोशिश करेंगे कि अप्रैल से जून तक हम काफी खर्चा कर लें और काफी हमने लाइनअप भी कर लिया है।”

2.6 The Committee wished to know the specific steps proposed during the year 2023-24 by the Department to improve the lives of persons with disability. In response, the Department submitted as under:-

Aids & assistive devices for new disabilities will be provided.

- a) Monitoring and physical inspection through CPMU Team for effective implementation.
- b) Free Coaching and National Overseas Scholarship Schemes of the Department is proposed to be implemented in online mode on the pattern of similar Free Coaching and National Overseas Scholarship Schemes being implemented in Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- c) Digital signature is being implemented on UDID cards for assessment authenticity.
- d) Assessment provision in home district or treating hospital (as notified by state government - under process).
- e) Monitoring and Physical inspection of training centre through CPMU
- f) On-boarding of NAP on PM-DAKSH portal is under process.
- g) After on-boarding on PM-DAKSH, PwD beneficiary will be able to apply directly for Training Programme.
- h) Developing demand driven model like Recruit-Train-Deploy (RTD).
- i) Cross Disability Early Intervention Centres for Divyangjan
- j) A Centre for Disability Sports
- k) Construction of New Composite Regional Centres.

2.7 It is pertinent to quote a revised procedure, referred to by the Ministry during their oral evidence before the Committee for release of funds under the Centrally Sponsored

Schemes (CSS) implemented by the Ministry and monitoring utilization of the funds released, as per the PFMS Division, Department of Expenditure Circular dated 23.3.2021 and further modification dated 16.2.2023, which *inter-alia* include the following:-

"The General Financial Rule 232(v) prescribes the release of funds to the State Governments and monitoring utilization of funds through PFMS. For better monitoring of availability and utilization of funds released to the States under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and to reduce float, the Department of Expenditure *vide* letter of even number dated 16.12.2020 had shared a draft modified procedure for release of funds under CSS with all the State governments and Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India to seek their comments. The comments received from the State Governments and Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India were considered and the procedure has been suitably modified. With a view to have more effective cash management and bring more efficiency in the public expenditure management, it has been decided that the following procedure will be followed by all the State Governments and Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India regarding release and monitoring utilization of funds under CSS with effect from 1st July, 2021:-

- (a) Every State Government will designate a Single Nodal Agency (SNA) for implementing each CSS. The SNA will open a Single Nodal Account for each CSS at the State level in a Scheduled Commercial Bank authorized to conduct Government business by the State Government.
- (b) In case of Umbrella schemes which have multiple sub-schemes, if needed, the State Governments may designate separate SNAs for sub-schemes of the Umbrella Scheme with separate Single Nodal Accounts.
- (c) Implementing Agencies (IAs) down the ladder should use the SNA's account with clearly defined drawing limits set for that account. However, depending on operational requirements, zero-balance subsidiary accounts for each scheme may also be opened for the IAs either in the same branch of the selected bank or in different branches.
- (d) All zero balance subsidiary accounts will have allocated drawing limits to be decided by the SNA concerned from time to time and will draw on real time basis from the Single Nodal Account of the scheme as and when

payments are to be made to beneficiaries, vendors etc. The available drawing limit will get reduced by the extent of utilization.

- (e) The Ministries/ Departments will release the central share for each CSS to the State Government's Account held in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for further release to the SNA's Account.
- (f) After opening of Single Nodal Account of the scheme and before opening zero balance subsidiary account of IAs or assigning them drawing rights from SNA's account, the IAs at all levels shall return all unspent amounts lying in their accounts to the Single Nodal Account of the SNA. It will be the responsibility of the State government concerned to ensure that the entire unspent amount is returned by all the IAs to the Single Nodal Account of the SNA concerned. For this, the State Governments will work out the modalities and the timelines and will work out Central and state share in the amount so available with IAs.
- (g) Ministries/ Departments will ensure that releases under all CSS are made strictly as per the actual requirement on the ground, without resulting in any material float with the implementing agencies at any level.
- (h) The State Government will transfer the Central share received in its account in the RBI to the concerned SNA's account within a period of 21 days of its receipt. The Central share shall not be diverted to the Personal Deposit (PD) account or any other account by the State Government. Corresponding State share should be released as early as possible and not later than 40 days of release of the Central share. The funds will be maintained by the SNA in the Single Nodal Account of each CSS. State Governments/SNAs/IAs shall not transfer scheme-related funds to any other bank account, except for actual payments under the Scheme.
- (i) State Governments will register the SNAs and all IAs on PFMS and use the unique PFMS ID assigned to the SNA and IAs for all payments to them. Bank accounts of the SNAs, IAs vendors and other organizations receiving funds will also be mapped in PFMS.

- (j) Ministries/Departments shall undertake monthly review of the release of funds (both the Central and State Share) from the State treasury to the SNA, utilization of funds by SNAs and IAs and outputs/outcomes vis-à-vis the targets for each CSS.

In partial modification of the aforesaid provision in the guidelines, the Committee observed, it has been decided by the competent authority that the State Government shall transfer the Central share as well as the commensurate State share to the SNA account within 30 days of receipt of Central share. Further, it has been decided to charge interest *w.e.f.* 01.04.2023 on the number of days of delay beyond 30 days in transfer of Central share to the SNA account at the rate of 7% per annum. PFMS division, O/o CGA will issue guidelines regarding procedure for deposit of penal interest by the State Government concerned in the Consolidated Fund of India".

Similarly, for the Central Sector Schemes, where 100% funding and monitoring is done by the Central Government, the procedure for flow of funds was revised during 2022-23 on PFMS, portal by introducing CNA (Central Nodal Agency) under the Treasury Single Account (TSA) model. As per the O.M. dated 9.3.2022 issued by the Ministry of Finance, in case of CS Schemes having outlay of more than ₹500 crore and implemented without involvement of State agencies, the concerned Ministry/Department will designate an Autonomous Body as the CNA and for each of the Schemes, the CNA will open an account with the RBI in e-Kuber. It is a digital and fully on-line system on PFMS. Rest of the procedure is similar to SNA. Certain exemptions are made too in the said order.

2.8 The Committee note that the BE amount proposed by the Department for the year 2023 -24 was ₹1,239.65 crore, which was reduced to ₹1,225.15 crore as BE by the Ministry of Finance. Reportedly, the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) had in 2021, locked both the allocations and physical targets towards the Central Sector Schemes namely ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS and Scholarship for 5 years *i.e.* till 2025-26. The Committee therefore urge the Department to review the underutilization of funds and take appropriate remedial measures with focused attention on regular monitoring and strict evaluation to ensure optimal utilization of the remaining amount in the coming 3 years till 2025-26 as per the EFC decision, locking targets of four schemes of the Department.

CHAPTER-III

GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) have furnished the following statement showing the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure for the previous years along with the Budget Estimates for the year 2023-24 as under:-

(₹. in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure	% of Expenditure .w.r.t RE allocation
2019-20	1204.90	1100	1016.18	92.38
2020-21	1325.39	900	861.63	95.73
2021-22	1171.77	1044.31	1009.45	96.66
2022-23	1212.42	1015.98	612.73 (upto13.02.2023)	60.30
2023-24	1225.15			

3.2 A detailed statement is given in the table below:-

Scheme wise Plan Outlays and Expenditure during 2020-21 to 2022-23 & BE-2023-24 (In ₹ Crore)

Sl No	Name of the Schemes	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24
		BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE*	BE
1	Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase of Fitting Devices (ADIP)	230.00	195.00	189.13	220.00	180.00	198.70	235.00	230.00	146.01	245.00
2	Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)	130.00	85.00	83.18	125.00	105.00	100.90	125.00	105.00	58.60	130.00
3	Schemes Arising out of The Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA)	251.50	122.89	103.43	209.77	147.31	108.44	240.39	100.00	29.20	150.00
4	Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	125.00	100.00	97.40	125.00	110.00	120.32	105.00	145.00-	87.97	155.00
5	Indian Spinal Injury Centre	4.00	4.00	3.99	Merged under SIPDA						
	Schemes Total	740.50	506.89	477.13	679.99	542.31	528.36	705.39	580.00	321.78	680.00
	Non-Scheme Plan Outlays and Expenditure (In ₹ Crore)										
6	Budgetary Support to National Trust	39.50	30.00	29.80	30.00	30.00	28.14	35.00	30.00	27.37	35.00
7	National Institutes (NIs)	360.00	260.75	256.81	319.00	332.50	329.49	365.00	310.00	207.77	385.00
8	Rehabilitation Council Of India (RCI)	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	6.40	6.40	5.50	6.40
9	Establishment of National Institute for Inclusive and Universal Design	0.01	00	00	0.01	00	00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
10	Grants -in-aid to National	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01

	University of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies										
11	Establishment of Centre For Disability Sports	100.00	19.50	18.93	53.41	40.00	39.80	60.00	56.00	15.91	76.00
12	Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	60.00	50.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.01
13	National Handicapped Finance & Development Corp. (NHFDC)	0.01	00	00	0.01	00	00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
14	Secretariat (Est. Exptd.)	25.00	23.50	20.50	29.00	29.00	24.28	35.00	28.08	21.69	37.22
15	Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (Est. Exptd.)	4.86	3.86	2.96	5.06	5.00	3.88	5.50	5.50	2.21	5.50
	Total Non Scheme	584.89	393.11	384.5	491.78	502.00	481.09	507.03	435.98	280.28	545.15
	Grand Total	1325.39	900.00	861.63	1171.77	1044.31	1009.45	1212.42	1015.98	612.73	1225.15
*as on 13.02.2023											

3.3 In view of the almost stagnant /negligible increase in BE since 2019-20, the Committee desired to be apprised of the reasons for the same, in response the Department have stated that:-

"The BE 2023-24 in respect of the Central Sector Schemes namely ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS and Scholarship were recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in its meeting held on 11.08.2021 for continuation of next five years. All the four schemes are appraised and approved with financial allocation and physical targets for the entire period of the 15th Finance Commission's recommendations. Therefore, the CS Schemes allocation is done as per the approved EFC. Further, the additional allocation is made for National Institutes and Centre for Disability under the Non schemes of the Department".

3.4 In light of the contraction of funds at the RE stage for 2022-23, the Committee enquired about major areas of shortfall. In reply, the Department have stated that:-

"The major reasons for shortfall in expenditure is implementation of CNA module, pending UCs and non-receipt of sufficient proposals from NGOs and CAPEX expenditure, the pace of the expenditure was slow in the first two quarters, therefore, MoF has reduced the allocation in RE 2022-23".

3.5 On being asked about the requisite measures taken/ being taken for course correction, the Department have stated as under:-

"After taking up the matter with PFMS and CGA, the CNA module has now been implemented under all CS Schemes and the funds are now being releasing through CNA Model-2. As regards, pending UCs and deficient documents, the Department has written several D.O letters to IAs/States/NGOs and conducted various VCs to ensure that the funds are released timely".

3.6 From the information furnished by the Department it was seen that the Department had spent around 92.38%, 95.73% and 96.66% of the Revised Allocation during the year 2019-20 to 2021-22 respectively. While COVID -19 pandemic affected utilization during the year 2020-2021, other years also did not show full utilization of funds. Asked to enumerate the specific reasons for shortfalls in the actual expenditure from 2019-20 onwards it was submitted that:-

"The marginal shortfall in actual expenditure was due to multiple factors which included the following:-

- a) Skill Training has been undergoing a rigorous overhaul this year to enable streamlining of the process, to check financial irregularities by Empanelled Training Partners (ETPs) and to ensure a robust and secure fund flow mechanism. Training is imparted through Empanelled Training Partners (ETPs). Validity of most of the ETPs has expired.
- b) UCs from State Governments was not received under SIPDA Scheme
- c) Due to non-receipt of adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Categories and
- d) Due to lesser demands under Capital Expenditure”.

3.7 The Committee then pointed out that the BE for the financial year 2022-23 was ₹1,212.42 crore which was reduced to ₹1,015.98 crore at RE stage whereas the actual expenditure is ₹612.73 crore as on 13.02.2023. In that context, the Committee asked whether the Ministry would be able to utilize the remaining amount of ₹403.25 crore which is around 60.30 % of the RE by 31 March 2023 (FY 2022-23). The Department stated that they were making all-out effort to utilize the entire RE Allocation. It was further informed that as on date, a number of proposals are under process in various schemes/non schemes of the Department and it is expected that the entire RE allocation will be spent by 31.03.2023.

3.8 Responding to a query on the reasons behind the uneven spending pattern where the Department managed to utilize around 60 percent of the budget in 10 months leaving a substantial 40 percent of expenditure to be utilized in the last 2 months, the Department replied that:-

“The schemes under this Department are all Central Sector Schemes, where funds are released to the implementing agencies whereby the Department itself has to ensure the monitoring and utilization of the funds released unlike in Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). Moreover, the major schemes/non schemes namely SIPDA, DDRS, ADIP, Scholarship and National Institutes are demand driven based on the proposals received from States/UTs/Institutions/NGOs and individuals etc. Generally, proposals are received in the first 2 quarters which are examined resulting in major releases in the two subsequent quarters”.

3.9 Scrutiny of the Budget documents reveal that the Department have been consistently failing in adhering to the Budget Division (Ministry of Finance) guidelines regarding ceiling limit of expenditure *i.e.* 33% in the last quarter and 15% in the last month of the fiscal year. In this regard, the Department were asked to explain these deviations along with the measures taken by them to address the concerns during 2022-23. In reply, the Department submitted as under:-

“Department is making all-out efforts to utilize the entire RE Allocation. As on date, nearly 70% allocation has been concurred by IFD and numbers of proposals are under process in various schemes/non schemes of the Department. Further, if required, the Department will seek exemption/relaxation in the last quarter and last month of financial year 2022-23 with proper reasons for utilizing the remaining RE allocation.”

3.10 The Secretary, acknowledging the shortfall in spending outlined the planning of the Department for optimal utilization of future funding as under:-

“मैं आपको यकीन दिलाना चाहूंगा कि स्कॉलरशिप, एडिप और डी डी आर एस में हमारी कमी नहीं रहेगी। अगर हमारे बजट का पूरा यूज नहीं हो पाएगा, तो वह सिष्ठा स्कीम में रहेगा, लेकिन उसके लिए भी हम प्रयास कर रहे हैं। बजट घटाया गया है। इस बजट को हम जरूर हासिल करने की चेष्टा करेंगे।”

3.11 The overall achievements in physical targets during last three years alongwith targets fixed for 2023-24 under various schemes are as under:-

Scheme Name	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24
	Physical Target	Achievement	Physical Target	Achievement	Physical Target	Achievement	Physical Targets
ADIP	3.00 lakh beneficiaries	2.58 lakh beneficiaries	2.00 lakh beneficiaries	2.43 lakh beneficiaries	2.05 lakh beneficiaries	1.76 lakh beneficiaries	2.15 lakh beneficiaries
DDRS	42370	31542	40000	30173	40000	21230	40000
Scholarships for Students with Disabilities	44520	26067	44520	42131	44520	23702	44520
Skill Training under SIPDA	8500	2918	22000	2911	17000	2391	17000

3.12 The Committee desired to know about the criteria adopted by the Department while setting physical targets for the implementation of the schemes etc. administered by them. In reply, the Department have stated that both budget allocations and physical targets have been fixed by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) for period of five year from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

3.13 A perusal of the above data reveals that there have been shortfalls in the achievement of physical targets in some major schemes during 2022-23. Asked to state the reasons for shortfalls in the achievement of targets in a number of Schemes during 2020-21 and 2021-22 the Department submitted as under:-

Year	Reasons for shortfall
2020-21	<p>ADIP - Due to impact of COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year, target could not be achieved.</p> <p>DDRS-Due to increase in cost norms by 2.5 times with no proportional increase in budget which resulted in release to less number of projects and hence lesser number of beneficiaries were supported</p> <p>Scholarship for Students with Disabilities- Due to COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>National Action Plan for Skill Training under SIPDA-Owing to COVID-19 related restrictions, training commencement could not begin before late August</p>
2021-22	<p>ADIP – No shortfall</p> <p>DDRS-Due to increase in cost norms by 2.5 times with no proportional increase in budget which resulted in release to less number of projects and hence lesser number of beneficiaries were supported</p> <p>Scholarship for Students with Disabilities-Shortfall in the figure of achievement is mainly on account of non-operation of Free coaching component of the scheme with 2000 yearly slots.</p> <p>National Action Plan for Skill Training under SIPDA-Validation of training centres made mandatory, allocation of targets and commencement of training was allowed only at centres validated by SCPwD or under SMART and Training under new project was not allowed for those ETPs which had not completed previous project</p>

3.14 The following new initiatives have been taken to rationalize the existing system and to ensure better delivery of service to the targeted beneficiaries under various Schemes:-

- (i) **ADIP Scheme:** Third party impact evaluation study was done through National Institute of Labour Economic Research and Development(NILERD), an Autonomous Institution under the aegis of the NITI Aayog. Based on the observations and findings of the impact evaluation study report, the Scheme was revised and some major modifications/changes are as follows:-

- a) Enhancement of Income Ceiling of beneficiaries from ₹15,000/- per month to ₹22,500/- per month for full subsidy of aids and assistive devices and from ₹20,000/- per month to ₹30,000/- per month for 50% subsidy.
- b) Raising the cost ceiling of aids and assistive devices from ₹10,000/- to ₹15,000/-
- c) Enhancement of subsidy for Motorized Tricycle and Wheelchair from ₹25,000/- to Rs.50,000/- to be provided once in 5 years in place of existing 10 years.
- d) Provision for high end prosthesis up to the maximum ceiling of ₹30,000/-.
- e) Raising the cost limit of corrective surgeries for orthopedically impaired persons from ₹10,000/- to ₹15,000/-; ₹2,000/- to ₹3,000/- for visually impaired and from ₹1,000/- to ₹1,500/- for hearing impaired.
- f) Enhancement of cost of Cochlear Implant Surgery from ₹6.00 Lakh to ₹7.00 Lakh in respect of children with pre-lingual hearing loss between 1 to 5 years of age and ₹ 6 lakhs in case of children acquired hearing loss between 05-18 years. The Financial support will cover the cost of implant surgery, therapy, mapping, travel cost and pre-implant assessment in both the cases.

(ii) Scheme for implementation of Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) Scheme:

National Action Plan for Skill Development Programs:

- (a) Change in fund flow mechanism
- (b) Introduction of Surprise inspection
- (c) Introduction of Biometric Attendance System
- (d) Introduction of centre guidelines
- (e) Simplification of Process

Furthermore, following steps are underway:

- i. Association of Sector Skill Council (SSC): To strengthen the base of training partners, Department is also associating with SSC.
- ii. MIS Portal: An MIS portal has been developed with a view to ease the system of the empanelment of ETPs.
- iii. For providing better quality of skill training, Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) has been authorized by the Deptt. for validating the training centre.
- iv. Webinars are also held on regular basis with the ETPs on different issues.

- v. MoU with Flipkart & Amazon: MoUs with both the companies to provide skill training to PwDs for employment opportunities in the E-commerce sectors.
- vi. National Action Plan(NAP) under SIPDA will be implemented through PM-DAKSH Portal.

(iii) **National Trust:**

- a) Constitution of Local Project Committee (LPC): The main purpose of constituting LPC is to ensure overall safety and mainstreaming of beneficiaries, ensuring proper utilization of funds released from the National Trust and sensitizing the community about the need of Divyangjan covered under the National Trust Act. The Chairman of the LPC will be decided in the first meeting of the LPC by the members.
- b) Monitoring mechanism– There is monitoring mechanism under all centre based schemes. Under this, information on important parameters are provided by the project holder on half yearly basis online in monitoring docket of the Scheme Management System.
- c) Issue of guidelines for implementation of centre based schemes during COVID-19 – The National Trust has issued detailed guidelines for implementation of centre based schemes during COVID -19.

(iv) **National Institutes:** Department of Expenditure reviewed the Autonomous Bodies under this Department and sent a report suggesting rationalization of these bodies with a view to synergizing functions, ensuring concerted outcomes, economizing on resources and staffing. After inter-departmental consultation, a draft 'Note for the Cabinet' was finalized and sent to Cabinet Secretariat and PMO in July 2022. Subsequently, DEPwD received a direction from PMO to withdraw the Cabinet Note which was followed by a formal communication dated 11/07/2022 from PMO giving the following directions:-

- a) The proposal may be examined in consultation with the Ministries concerned as to how the coordination mechanism can be improved amongst various National Institutions working in the disability sector so as to bring in greater synergy and better outcomes.
- b) Matter should be discussed with the State Governments concerned as well as other stakeholders.

PMO directions, as mentioned in preceding paras, are being pursued with by the Department and the Department is doing consultations with State Governments and other Ministries.

3.15 The Committee find that non receipt of Utilization Certificates and non-receipt of adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Categories, deficient documents from NGOs/IAs affected the overall financial performance of the Department. In this context, the Committee find that non-receipt/late receipt of 'Utilization Certificates' and viable adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Categories from various States/ implementing partners has become a perennial problem causing under-utilization of funds consistently over the years. Taking into cognizance the various measures taken by the Department which include inter-alia monitoring of flow of funds through PFMS, physical visits, video conferencing with Implementing Agencies/State Governments, Review Meetings by Secretary, DEPwD, monitoring of expenditure under various schemes through periodic senior level officers meetings etc. for maximum utilization of allocated funds, the Committee feel that these efforts should result in better financial performance and receipt of good proposals from States well in time, hence desire that focused attention needs to be paid towards removing all impediments and concrete measures taken accordingly. The Committee note that the introduction of the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) model with effect from 1.4.2022 has brought in a revised process of fund flow under Central Sector Schemes on the PFMS Portal, which was finalised in August, 2022. Recognising that changes in existing processes and procedures take time to regularise, the Committee urge the Department to expedite all necessary procedural formalities for implementation of the CNA model in their Central Sector Schemes.

CHAPTER-IV

ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED PERSONS FOR PURCHASE/FITTING OF AIDS/APPLIANCES (ADIP)

The main objective of the Scheme ADIP is to provide grants-in-aid to the various implementing agencies (National Institutes/ Composite Regional Centres /Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India(ALIMCO)/District Disability Rehabilitation Centres/State Handicapped Development Corporations/other local bodies/ NGOs) to assist needy persons with disabilities in procuring durable, scientifically manufactured standard aids and appliances to promote physical, social and psychological rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities through reducing the effects of disabilities and at the same time enhancing their economic potential. The Implementing Agencies are given financial assistance for purchasing/fitting of aids & assistive devices to the eligible Divyangjan through camp activity and headquarter activity. Assistive devices are given to persons with disabilities with the aim of improving their independent functioning, and arresting the extent of disability and occurrence of secondary disability. The aids and appliances supplied under the Scheme must have due certification. The Scheme also envisages conduct of corrective surgeries, whenever required, before providing an assistive device. The Scheme has been revised *w.e.f* 01.04.2022. The EFC has frozen the allocation under ADIP scheme at ₹1,176.00 crore for a period of 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The details of which are as under:-

₹ in crore

Year	Allocations fixed for ADIP by EFC
2021-22	180
2022-23	235
2023-24	245
2024-25	255
2025-26	261
Total	1176

4.2 The Eligibility Criteria for this Scheme is as under:-

- a) Should have 40% disablement certificate.
- b) Monthly income from all sources should not exceed ₹22,500/ per month for 100% concession and ₹22,501/- to ₹30,000/- per month for 50% concession.
- c) New assistive device supplied only after 3 years for the same purpose. However, for children below 12 years of age the same can be supplied after 1 year.
- d) Income certificate of beneficiaries staying in orphanages and half-way homes may be accepted on certification by District Collector or Head of the Organization concerned.

4.3 The Department have furnished the details following statement showing the BE, RE and Actual Expenditure (AE) incurred under the ADIP Scheme for the last 3 years and BE for 2023-24:-

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure
2019-20	230.00	222.50	213.83
2020-21	230.00	195.00	189.13
2021-22	220.00	180.00	198.70
2022-23	235.00	230.00	146.01(as on 24.01.2023)
2023-24	245.00	-	-

4.4 A perusal of the data furnished revealed that for the year, 2019-20, an amount of ₹230.00 crore was earmarked under the ADIP scheme but RE was downsized to ₹222.50 crore whereas the actual expenditure was ₹213.83 crore. For the year 2020-21 the BE was ₹230.00 crore, the RE was ₹195.00 crore whereas the actual expenditure was ₹189.13 crore only. For the Financial Year 2021-22, the BE was lowered from the previous Financial Year to ₹220.00 crore and the RE was downsized to ₹180.00 crore however the expenditure was ₹198.70 crore. BE allocation of ₹235 crore for 2022-23 was downsized to ₹230 crore at RE stage,

whereas the actual expenditure till 24.01.2023 is ₹146.01 crore only, which is around 63% of the RE allocation.

4.5 When asked about the reasons for the shortfalls, the Department submitted as under:-

"The Budget allocation for 2019-20 was ₹230.00 crore which was reduced to ₹222.50 crore at RE Stage. Against the RE allocation of ₹222.50 crore, an amount of ₹213.83 crore which represents 96% of the allocation was spent during the year. The entire RE allocation could not be utilized due to the fact that sufficient camps could not be held due to imposition of model code of conduct on account General Elections. Further, due to COVID-19 pandemic, funds could not be released towards the end of the year as distribution of aids and assistive devices was not possible in March, 2020. In the year 2020-21, the budget allocation was ₹230.00 crore was reduced to ₹195.00 crore at RE stage due to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown throughout the country. Camps were postponed *w.e.f* 13.03.2020. Hence, due to the impact of COVID 19 pandemic which directly affected and prohibited holding of bigger camps the entire RE allocation could not be released. In the year 2021-22, RE allocation made as per recommendations of Expenditure Finance Committee the total financial outlay for 5 years *i.e.* from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Accordingly, the RE allocation was fixed at ₹180.00 crore. During the 2022-23, the procedure for flow of funds under the Central Sector Scheme has been revised on PFMS Portal by introducing CNA model. Hence, the funds released under the ADIP Scheme in the 1st & 2nd quarter, could not be properly utilized by the Implementing Agencies due to technical difficulties in Portal for utilization of funds".

4.6 Asked by the Committee to state the specific reasons for leaving a large chunk of unspent funds for the last quarter and whether the Department would be able to achieve the laid down objectives within the stipulated time, the Department in a written reply submitted as under:-

"During the current financial year, the procedure for flow of funds under the Central Sector Scheme has been revised on PFMS Portal by introducing Central Nodal Agency (CNA) model which was finalized only in August, 2022. Hence, the funds released under the ADIP Scheme in the 1st and 2nd quarter could not be properly utilized by the Implementing Agencies due to technical difficulties in portal in utilization of funds."

4.7 The Committee were assured, however, that against the unspent balance of ₹85.06 crore, sufficient proposals are in the pipeline for approval to release the funds. Therefore, funds under this head may be consumed upto allocation in BE 2022-23. Elaborating the issue, the Secretary of the Department deposed before the Committee in evidence as follows:-

“सर, इसमें भी हम ओवरस्पेंड कर रहे हैं। हम लोग 230 करोड़ रुपये तक जाकर रुकने वाले नहीं हैं, हम कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि 270 करोड़ रुपये के आस-पास यह खर्च हो जाएगा।।”

4.8 When enquired whether sufficient activities had been lined up with the Department to achieve 100% target by the end of financial year, the Department in response stated as under:-

“Yes providing aids & assistive devices to eligible divyangjan through Headquarter Activity, Camp Activity, Cochlear Implant and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are there in order to achieve the laid targets. It was further submitted that the Department had organized multiple camps on the single day *i.e.* 17.09.2022 and 14.01.2023 across the country wherein aids & assistive devices were provided to more than 29,000 Divyangjan and 50,000 Divyangjan respectively. Now, the Department is planning to organize multiple camps for distribution of aids & assistive devices in the Month of March, 2023 under the Scheme.”

4.9 The Committee pointed out that an amount of ₹245 crore has been earmarked as BE under the Scheme for 2023-24, which was an increase of ₹15 crore as compared to RE 2022-23. Regarding the preparedness of the Department to utilize the enhanced amount, the Committee were informed through a written reply as under:-

Activity	Funds allocated (₹in crore)	Number of beneficiaries to be covered
Camp/Headquarter Activity	145.00	172500
ADIP-SSA	40.00	41500
Cochlear Implant	60.00	1000
Total	245.00	215000

4.10 In addition to existing system of assessment of beneficiaries through camps mode, registration of beneficiaries through online (Arjun Portal) mode across the country will also be done during 2023-24. Hence, more number of beneficiaries would be registered and identified for providing aids & assistive devices under the ADIP Scheme and the funds allocated for distribution of aids and assistive devices will be fully utilized. If required, request for additional funds will be made at the RE stage.

4.11 The information pertaining to physical target and achievement under the ADIP Scheme for the last three years is as follows:-

Year	Physical Target	Achievement
2020-21	3.00 lakhs beneficiaries	2.58 lakhs beneficiaries
2021-22	2.00 lakhs beneficiaries	2.43 lakhs beneficiaries
2022-23	2.05 lakhs beneficiaries	1.76 lakhs beneficiaries (as on 31.1.2023)
2023-24	2.15 lakhs beneficiaries	-

4.12 In terms of physical targets and achievements, it is seen from the table above that under the ADIP scheme, for 2020-21, against the target of assisting 3 lakh beneficiaries the actual number of beneficiaries stood at 2.58 lakh. The Department stated reason therefor as impact of COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year. In 2021-22 the achievement was 2.43 lakh as against a target of 2 lakh beneficiaries. For 2022-23 the target was fixed at 2.05 lakh and the achievement, as on 31.01.2023, is stated to be 1.76 lakh beneficiaries. For 2023-24, the target has been kept at 2.15 lakh.

4.13 To a specific query on the reasons for reducing the target by almost 35 % during 2021-22 especially given that Covid pandemic had severely limited the scope of the scheme during the preceding year, the Department have stated that:-

“They kept the prudent targets keeping in mind impact of COVID 19 pandemic which directly affected and prohibited holding of bigger camps in the Districts”.

4.14 Regarding the specific reasons for negligible upward revision of target in 2022-23 and again during 2023-24, the Department have submitted that:-

“The cost of aids and assistive devices was enhanced in the revised scheme resulting in less coverage of beneficiaries against the allocated budget”.

4.15 So far the achievement in terms of beneficiaries assisted during 2022-23 stands at 1.76 lakh. To a query as to whether the Department would be able to achieve the target of 2.05 lakh and the steps being taken to achieve this, the Department have submitted that:-

“1.76 Lakh beneficiaries have been benefitted, which is 85.85% of the physical targets. The Department is planning for organising multiple camps for distribution of aids & assistive devices in the Month of March, 2023 under the Scheme.Hence, the target may be achieved by 31.03.2023”.

4.16 It has been stated that the Department has enhanced the subsidy for Motorized Tricycle and Wheelchair from ₹25,000/- to ₹50,000/- to be provided once in 5 years, in place of existing 10 years. To a query on the percentage of subsidy component and the prescribed process for obtaining of these aids by a beneficiary, the Committee were informed as under:-

	Motorized Tricycle			Motorized Wheel Chair		
Income ceiling	Cost of Motorized Tricycle Cycle (MTC)	Subsidy on MTC	% of subsidy on MTC	Cost of Motorized Wheel chairs	Subsidy on Motorized Wheel Chair.	% of subsidy Motorized Wheel Chairs
Upto 22,500/- per month	₹42,000/-	₹42,000/-	100%	₹72,000/-	₹50,000/-	69.44

4.17 To obtain these devices a beneficiary needs to submit a Disability Certificate showing atleast 80% disability and an income certificate with a limit of ₹22,500 per month for 100% subsidy and income limit of ₹30,000 per month for 50% subsidy.

4.18 In response to a specific query on whether there was any planning on providing some relief to the beneficiaries in terms of reduction in the provisions of disability percentage or the reduction on income limits, the Secretary deposed before the Committee as under:-

"किसी-किसी स्कीम में, जैसे कॉक्लियर इम्प्लांट वगैरह में लिमिट ज्यादा है, पर सभी तरफ लिमिट बढ़ाने की जरूरत है। कई जगहों पर हमने 40 प्रतिशत, 80 प्रतिशत इत्यादि दिव्यांगता की लिमिट लगाई है। उस पर भी हमारी इंटरनल चर्चा जारी है और स्वास्थ्यविभाग के साथ भी हमारी चर्चा जारी है कि क्या हम इस लिमिट को कम कर सकते हैं। सर, कहीं-कहीं इन्कम लिमिट को कम करेंगे और जहां 80 प्रतिशत दिव्यांगता की लिमिट है, उसे घटाकर 40 प्रतिशत या 60 प्रतिशत पर ले आएंगे। सर, हम अपने 6-7 योजनाओं में से दो-तीन में तो इन्कम लिमिट को कम कर पाएंगे और सभी 6 योजनाओं में हम यह कर पाएंगे, इसका कमिटमेंट में अभी नहीं कर सकता।"

4.19 Regarding the process for quality control of the aids and appliances supplied under the ADIP Scheme, the Committee were informed that the aids and assistive devices by the Implementing Agencies must have due certification. Further, ALIMCO is major implementing agency manufacturing/distributing aids & assistive devices to the Divyangjan under the Scheme. The quality control measures followed by ALIMCO are as under:-

- A well defined in-house Multi Level Quality control checks systems for incoming material, in-process and final products.
- Quarterly Quality checks for 16 fast moving products by Quality Council of India (QCI), A Govt. of India Organization. Satisfactory Quality Compliance certified by QCI in since FY 2019-20.
- Certifications of Quality Management System (QMS) & Environmental Management System (EMS) Certification *i.e.* ISO 9001-2015 & ISO14001-2015 through Bureau of Indian Standards.
- BIS Certifications for 19 categories of aids and assistive devices.
- Procurement of ISI marked material wherever available.
- Up-gradation of Quality Control through set-up of new quality check equipment's/ machineries.

- Introduction of state of art CNC machine and Automated plants for production of parts and components in process controlled environment.
- Transportation by closed body containers at Camp sites”.

4.20 The Committee desired to know the method of replacement of defective or poor quality aids and appliances. In reply, the Department assured the Committee that:-

“While aids and assistive devices distributed to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are generally of high quality yet as per the Scheme guidelines, repair/replacement for defective aids/appliances are taken care of by concerned implementing agencies for 01 year from the date of distribution. Further, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO) being one of the major implementing agencies for providing aids & assistive devices to the Divyangjan, in case, any defect in aids & assistive devices is reported by any beneficiary, immediate appropriate action is taken to rectify the defect at the nearest Centre of the Corporation for the convenience of PwDs. ALIMCO has a well-defined system in fixing the responsibility and accountability in the event of any major problem concerning of quality of aids and assistive devices. Disciplinary proceedings are undertaken in the event of failure to comply with the standardized quality of aids & assistive devices. Similar arrangements are available with other implementing agencies at their centres. Further it was informed that request for repairs/replacement for aids/appliances can also be raised on ARJUN Portal to the concerned implementing agencies”.

4.21 Explaining about the 'Arjun' portal further, the Ministry informed that Arjun ADIP-MIS' Portal for ADIP Scheme was formally launched/functional from 15th September, 2022. It has been developed through C-DAC which facilitates near Real Time Monitoring of beneficiary data and also prevent & check duplication of beneficiaries. It also includes online registration of beneficiaries for new devices/repair, filing grievances and facilitates the implementing agencies in data management and compliance. To a query on the manner, it had brought about improvement in the data management under the

scheme, the Committee was apprised that all ADIP beneficiary data since 2014 has been uploaded on the portal. It facilitates in checking duplicity of beneficiaries, online submission of beneficiary data, and reduce time lag and digitization of records of beneficiary data. All the implementing agencies receiving grant-in-aid since, 2014 have registered themselves on the portal and are uploading beneficiaries data. Till now, 1465 online applications of beneficiaries have been received through the Portal.

4.22 Regarding the challenges faced by the Department in implementation of the various schemes, it has been informed that Implementing Agencies are sometime facing network issues in remote areas while uploading beneficiaries data resulting in time lag in date of distribution and data feeding on the portal that effects real-time monitoring. This Scheme caters beneficiaries widely from weaker section with lack of literacy, most of beneficiaries are facing difficulties in applying online mode for aids and assistive devices.

4.23 Regarding the Monitoring Mechanism put in place for monitoring the implementation of the ADIP Scheme, the Committee have been furnished the following information:-

- (i) The Scheme has been on boarded on DBT Bharat Portal.
- (ii) Allocation of States/UTs to officers in the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and to National Institutes, for inspection, monitoring and guidance to Grantee Organizations under the Disability related Schemes of the Ministry.
- (iii) Central Project Monitoring Unit (CPMU) has been made by the Department for inspection, monitoring of quality parameters and preparing reports, data analysis etc.
- (iv) Under ADIP Scheme, the grants are released on recommendations of the concerned State Government upon receipt of an Inspection Report with regard to a particular implementing agency. The recommending authority also conducts 15% (in case of GIA up to ₹ 10.00 Lakhs) and 10% (in case of GIA exceeding ₹10.00 Lakhs) test check/ sample checking of assisted beneficiaries from the previous grant to the organization.
- (v) Organizations are also required to furnish audited utilization certificate in respect of the previous grant (s) released to them.
- (vi) Under ADIP Scheme, Implementing Agencies should also maintain a website and upload details of grants received, utilized and list of

- beneficiaries along with photo and Ration Card Number/Voter ID Number/Aadhaar Card Number, as the case may be. (As per instructions of the Government Aadhaar Number though obtained is not displayed).
- (vii) On-line submission and processing of NGOs proposals on e-Anudan Portal.
 - (viii) Mandatory Registration of NGOs on Niti Aayog Portal (NGO Darpan).
 - (ix) Utilization of grants-in-aid through EAT (Expenditure Advance Transfer) Module of PFMS.
 - (x) Implementing agencies shall use 5% of the grant-in-aid as administrative/overhead expenses for conducting awareness, assessment and follow-up camps. For Mega Camps where the number of beneficiaries are 1000 and above and Camps are attended by Cabinet/State Ministers (SJ&E)/Chief Ministers, an additional 5% administrative expenditure is allowable under the Scheme.

4.24 The Committee find that Assistance of Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP) is one of the most important schemes for empowerment of PwDs by providing assistive devices and corrective surgeries. They note that an amount of ₹235.00 crore has been allocated as BE 2022-23 under ADIP, which was revised to ₹230.00 crore at RE stage and actual expenditure so far is ₹146.01 crore. An amount of ₹245.00 crore has been allocated as BE 2023-24. The outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic and restrictions due to social distancing norms which disrupted the entire manufacturing and distribution mechanism of the Scheme have been cited as the reasons for shortfalls in expenditure. While taking note of the genuine predicament of the Department as large gathering for distribution of aids and appliances as well as for holding of camps were suspended, the Committee impress upon the Department to now resort to a focused approach by taking up special drives regularly for holding of camps, programmes etc during the year 2023-24 to ensure full utilization of the BE allocation of ₹245 crore as earmarked for the fiscal. The Department has also informed the Committee about their future plan on holding camps this year. In this regard, the Committee would like to recommend that in addition to the holding of camps etc, the Department should also place emphasis on

extensive publicity of the scheme so that greater number of PwDs are acquainted with the services offered under this scheme and maximum number of PwDs can avail the benefits of the same. The Committee suggest that the Department can earmark certain days like national holidays/festivals/International day of PwDs etc., as is done for the Pulse Polio Immunization campaign, for holding of simultaneous camps all across the country annually so that a public perception around this idea is created and greater turnout at such camps is ensured.

4.25 The Committee, appreciate the initiative of the Department for launching the 'Arjun ADIP-MIS' Portal for ADIP Scheme from 15th September, 2022. Developed through C-DAC, this portal would not only undertake Real Time Monitoring of beneficiary data but also prevent and check duplication of beneficiaries. Besides, it also includes online registration of beneficiaries for new devices/repair and file grievances and facilitates the implementing agencies in data management and compliance. The Committee are confident that this initiative will bring about a welcome change in maintaining and generating disability statistics for arriving at accurate numbers for equitable allocation as well as setting targets.

CHAPTER-V

SCHEME FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016 (SIPDA)

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has been implementing a central sector scheme, the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) for providing financial assistance for undertaking various activities outlined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act). SIPDA is an umbrella "Central Sector Scheme" comprising of 10 sub-schemes after revision during Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) meeting held on 11.08.2021. The SIPDA scheme has been approved by Hon'ble Finance Minister in line with the recommendations of EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee) for revision and continuation from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

5.2 The following 10 sub-schemes/components are under the umbrella SIPDA scheme:-

- a) Creation of barrier free environment for Persons with Disabilities
- b) Accessible India Campaign (AIC)
- c) National Action Plan for Skill Development for PWDs
- d) Unique Disability Identification (UDID) Project Awareness Generation and Publicity (AGP) with In-service Training and Sensitization of Key Functionaries of Central & State Governments, Local Bodies and Other Providers
- e) Financial support to Study and Research on priority areas of disability sector and to Research & Development of suitable product, aids & appliances for empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- f) Assistance to Spinal Injury Centers, new name after merger of State Spinal Injury Centre (SSIC) and Indian Spinal Injury Centre (ISIC) sub-schemes.
- g) Cross Disability Early Intervention Centre
- h) Sub-scheme as 'Projects under SIPDA (I) Braille Press scheme has been continued as a project through NIEPVD. Dehradun.(II) Financial Assistance to

existing Deaf Colleges in five regions of the country has been continued as a project through AYJNISHD Mumbai.

i) 10 Central Project Monitoring Unit (CPMU) cum Data Strategy Unit (DSU).

5.3 With regard to revision of the scheme, the Committee were informed that a new sub-scheme "Central Project Monitoring Unit (CPMU) cum Data Strategic Unit (DSU)" under SIPDA has been launched from F.Y. 2022-23. Under this sub-scheme 14 consultants have been engaged to monitor all the schemes of the Department including all the sub-schemes of SIPDA.

5.4 The Committee were apprised that allocation of funds for the sub-schemes under the umbrella scheme of SIPDA is done out of overall budget of SIPDA on the basis of the respective demands raised by the sub-schemes. The broad parameters to decide the budget allocation of any particular sub-scheme are previous year's performance and present year's demand of the respective sub-scheme, overall budget allocation for the umbrella scheme of SIPDA, any other special circumstances (if any) etc. Every sub-scheme of SIPDA has separate guidelines and a separate Program Division for incurring of total expenditure. The Program Division of each sub-scheme assesses and forecasts the fund requirement taking into account future releases for relevant proposals. This is an internal process of fund allocation of SIPDA. In case, one sub-scheme has shortage of funds while another has surplus, then internal re-allocation can be done for optimal utilization of the overall budget of SIPDA.

5.5 The Budget allocation, Revised allocation and actual expenditure incurred under SIPDA Scheme for the years 2019-20 to 2022-23 and BE 2023-24 are as under:-

Year	BE (₹ in Crore)	RE (₹ in Crore)	Actuals (₹ in Crore)
2019-20	315.00	260.00	217.34
2020-21	251.50	122.89	103.43
2021-22	209.77	147.31	108.44
2022-23	240.39	100	29.20 (as on 24.01.2023)
2023-24	150		

5.6 A perusal of the above table revealed that against the BE allocation of ₹315.00 crore for the financial year 2019-20 , the RE was reduced substantially and stood at ₹260.00 crore, out of which the actual was only ₹217.34 crore. In terms of year 2020-21 even though the RE was decreased by more than 50 percent, the actual expenditure fell considerably short. The pattern saw a repetition in subsequent years and the pace of spending remained abysmally slow. In fact, during the current Financial Year the RE was slashed by more than 60 percent, however the spending as on 24.01.2023 is only ₹29.20 crore which is less than 30 percent of RE and about 12 percent of BE 2022-23. The provision for 2023-24 is ₹150 crore, which is a reduction of almost 40 percent over the previous year.

5.7 To a query on whether the Department would be able to spend remaining 70 % of the RE 2022-23 funds within the financial year, the Department have stated that:-

“The balance fund (70%) will be utilized subject to fulfillment of all conditions as per guidelines of concerned sub-scheme of the umbrella SIPDA scheme and the availability of requisite proposals from the State governments in complete shape. Regarding the efforts being made to secure optimal expenditure , the Committee were informed that all the efforts were being made by the Department in the form of regular review meetings, awareness programs about the revised guidelines etc.”

5.8 Year-wise reasons for shortfall as submitted by the Department is enumerated as under:-

“In the beginning of F.Y. 2019-20, the SIPDA Budget was ₹315 crore and the budget was scaled down in RE to ₹260 crore after anticipating that major components of SIPDA schemes have not received adequate proposals to meet the expenditure upto the level of Budget Estimate(BE) of SIPDA scheme. However, at the end of F.Y. 2019-20, an amount of ₹217.34 crore as 83.59% of the RE could be utilized under SIPDA.

Further the FY. 2020-21 was remained affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and proposals were received with incomplete documents or not relevant as per scheme guidelines. On the other hand UC clearance was still awaited from

many states. However, due to rigorous follow-ups for clearance of pending UCs and completion of documents for processing, the expenditure could be incurred ₹103.43 crore i.e. 84.16%.

In FY 2021-22, the second wave of COVID pandemic affected a lot in working; however efforts were made to meet the expenditure against the allocated funds in RE. Accordingly, the SIPDA expenditure ₹108.44 crore was 73.61% of RE.

In FY 2022-23, under the revised procedure for flow of funds under Central Sector Scheme issued *vide* Department of Expenditure (DoE) OM dated 09.03.2022, multiple implementing agencies (Central Nodal Agencies CNA) including State/UT Governments have been designated for implementation of the SIPDA scheme as it is a umbrella scheme of sub schemes implemented by different programme divisions in the Department. The delay in expenditure utilization is because this process is taking some time in on- boarding of States into the CNA system and some States area facing challenges in marking as CNA under SIPDA, mapping of bank account with PFMS portal etc”.

5.9 The Committee were reassured that all these challenges are being overcome with constant interaction with States and as of now 19 States are onboard and remaining will be by end of February and this will increase spend of expenditure under this scheme. To a question as to whether the funds allocated under SIPDA for 2023-24 are sufficient to meet the expenditure expected to be incurred to achieve the target fixed, the Department assured that funds allocated for 2023-24 are adequate to meet the expenditure.

5.10 With regard to the measures taken/contemplated by the Department for achievement of targets fixed for 2023-24, the Committee have been informed that:-

“In order to receive sufficient proposal, the States/UTs are requested through VCs/letters to send proposals and submit the pending UCs. The review meetings at various levels are also convened to monitor the progress of the scheme. Further the guidelines of sub-scheme of SIPDA are available on the Department’s website for sending proposals. In order to optimize utilization of allocation of funds, regular meetings with State governments are being held at different levels. Awareness programme about the revised guidelines are being conducted for getting proposals from States. The meeting of screening committee is held at regular intervals for approval of new proposals received. The latest is being

planned on 17th Feb, 2023 in which proposals worth 15 crores (approx.) received from Rajasthan, West Bengal, Odisha, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, UP etc are being considered. Further, the Department conducted workshops to sensitize the States/UTs to spread awareness about schemes of the Department dated 4-5 March 2022 in Gujarat, 15th-16th September, 2022 in Indore, M.P. and 6th-7th January, 2023 in Goa”.

(i) Accessible India Campaign (SugamyaBharat Abhiyan)

5.11 A nationwide campaign, Accessible India Campaign) (AIC) or the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, was launched on December 3rd, 2015 to achieve universal accessibility for persons with disabilities in Built Environment (Buildings) Transport System and Information & Communication Technology ecosystem with the following targets:

- a) Enhancing the proportion of Accessible Government Buildings
- b) Enhancing the proportion of Accessible Transport System Airports, Railway Stations and Public Transport Carriers (Buses)
- c) Enhancing the portion of accessible government websites; pool of sign language interpreters, captioning and sign language interpretation of public television news programmes.

5.12 BE, RE and AE incurred under AIC for the last 3 financial years (year wise) is tabulated below:-

(in crore)

Components/ Sub-Schemes	2019-20			2020-21			2021-22	
	BE	RE	Fund released	BE	RE	Fund released	BE	Fund released
Accessible India Campaign*	105.00	112.00	134.19	105.00	56.37	54.03	80.00	0.57

5.13 On the basis of information received from various concerned nodal Central Ministries/Departments and efforts made by the Department, details under AIC till 15-12-2022 are furnished as under:-

Objective 1: Under the AIC lays down the following three targets with regard to enhancing the proportion of accessible government buildings, namely:-

- (a) Target 1.1: Completing accessibility audit of at least 25-50 most important government buildings in 50 cities and making them fully accessible by June 2022.
- (b) Target 1.2 : Making 50% of all the government buildings of National Capital and all the State capitals fully accessible by June 2022 and ;
- (c) Target 1.3: Completing accessibility audit of 50% of government buildings and making them fully accessible in 10 most important cities / towns of all the States (other than those, which are already covered in Target 1.1 and 1.2 above) by June 2022.

Objective 2: Under the Transportation System Accessibility objectives of AIC lists the following objectives :

Enhancing proportion of accessible airports

- a) Target 2.1: Conducting accessibility audit of all the international airports and converting them into fully accessible international airports by June 2022.
- b) Target 2.2: Conducting accessibility audit of all the domestic airports and converting them into fully accessible airports by June 2022.

Objective 3 relates to the Enhancing the proportion of accessible railway stations

- a) Target 3.1: Ensuring that A1, A & B categories of railway stations in the country are converted into fully accessible railway stations by June 2022.
- b) Target 3.2: Ensuring that 50% of railway stations in the country are converted into fully accessible railway stations by June 2022.

Objective 4 under AIC, relates to enhancing the proportion of accessible Public Transport. The target enumerates as under:

- c) Target 4.1: Ensuring that 25% of Government owned public transport carriers in the country are converted into fully accessible carriers by June 2022.

The timeline of June, 2022 was revised to March, 2024 for completion of all the above-mentioned targets of AIC, as was set by the Central Advisory Board, the

highest decision making body in the disability sector during the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice & Empowerment on June 24, 2022.

5.14 Regarding the achievements with respect to each of the targets set by the Department, the following tabulated information have been provided as under:-

Buildings:		
S. No.	Targets	Achievement as on 30.09.2022
1	State Government buildings funded by Centre (Target 1.1 for 1671 buildings)	Building Audited -1671 in 48 cities
		Completed Buildings -609
2	State Government buildings funded by State/UT funds (Target 1.2 and 1.3)	States/UTs participating -8
		Buildings identified 2851; 358 buildings completed
3	Central Government buildings	All 1100 identified buildings have been made accessible.
Transportation:		
S.No.	Targets	Achievement as on 30.09.2022
1	Transport - Civil Aviation (Target 2.1 & 2.2)	International Airport : all 35 have been made accessible
		Domestic Airports 55 out of 69 are made accessible
2	Transport- Railways (Target 3.1 & 3.2)	Fully accessible Railway Stations = 709 (Type A1, A & B) 50% of the stations have been partially made

		accessible.
3	Transport - Buses (target 4.1)	Out of 1,45,747 buses, 42,384 (29.05%) buses are partially accessible, and 8,695 (5.96%) buses are fully accessible. Out of 3533 bus station, 3120 are made accessible in respect to 24 States/Uts
ICT Infrastructure		
S.No.	Targets	Achievement as on 30.09.2022
1	ICT – Websites (target 5.1)	724 websites have been offered for development by States/UTs. Out of these 632 have been made accessible and 471 made live 95 out of 100 identified Central Govt websites made accessible by MeitY. Total funds released by the DEPwD-Rs 23.51cr

5.15 Responding to a query of the role of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) in implementing the Accessible India Campaign, the Department informed as under:-

“The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) provides financial assistance to State/UT Governments/Administration for converting buildings accessible identified under the target 1.1 of the Campaign. Further, it provides funds to ERNET India, an autonomous scientific society under the administrative control of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India for making State/UT Government identified websites accessible. DEPwD also monitors the progress of formulation of sector specific guidelines which are currently being prepare by 20 Ministries/Departments for the ensuring the accessibility for PwDs across the various sectors.”

5.16 It was further clarified thatDEPwD,being the nodal agency, allocates funds to the concerned States/UTs whereas concerned States/UTs are implementing agencies which provides list of completed buildings from time to time. Since concerned States/UTs are implementing agencies, they are responsible to submit the utilization certificates and project completion report to ensure that the buildings are made fully accessible.

5.17 With regard to the major challenges being faced by the Department in executing works under AIC and remedial measures being taken to overcome those, the Committee were informed that DEPwD observed delay in submission of UC which impacts the further fund release for the completion of the retrofitting of buildings and currently slow response regarding the submission of proposals for second installment, and indifference in regard to the furnishing of documents required for disbursement of the funds in second installment. Furthermore, regarding making websites accessible, there is a slow response recorded from concerned Departments to submit template approval, User Acceptance Test (UAT) approval and hosting the websites, which resulted in delay in the achievement of the targets.

5.18 For this purpose, DEPwD reportedly regularly monitors, through video conferences, emails, letters and reminders to States/UTs as course correction measures. The Department has also stated to have conducted meetings through video conference; sent emails, letters and reminders to the States/UTs regarding submitting physical/financial progress report, updation of data on MIS portal and in case of no work progress, refund of the released GIA. Further, it has reminded the States/UTs about the target and timelines for implementation of Accessible India Campaign in the Central Advisory Board meetings conducted annually.

5.19 One of the major problems in implementing schemes on such a large scale was the occurrence of slippages. To a query on whether there is any mechanism in place to prevent slippages and whether the structures so modified are monitored from time to time, the Committee was informed as under:-

“An MIS portal for real time online monitoring of the targets of the Campaign was launched in September 2019. To further improve the efficiency and prevent slippages and increase the outreach of the Portal, all Ministries/Departments provide data for public consumption”

(ii) Unique Disability ID Project (UDID)

5.20 The Department implements Unique Disability ID project with a view to creating a National Database for PwDs and also to issue Unique Disability ID cards to each PwD. It also provides an online platform for issuance of certificate of disability. An application software has already been developed and hosted on NIC cloud since May 2016. The Application Software also provides an online platform for issuance of disability certificates. The database will subsequently help in tracking physical and financial progress of benefit delivery at all levels of hierarchy of implementation – from Village, Block, District, State level and National level. It will also encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering Government benefits to persons with disabilities. The database captures personal details, identity details, disability details (type of disability, % of disability etc.), education status, employment details, Income level (BPL/APL, etc.), scheme related details etc. UDID database has been linked with Digilocker application of Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) for data security. Ministry of Railways has been requested to recognize the certificate of disability issued under UDID Project for the purpose of extending the benefit of concessional travel by train. Under this project, the Central Government supports the States/UTs financially towards:

- a) Publicity (@ ₹1.5 lakh – ₹2.5 lakh based on the population per District).
- b) Hardware component in the form of computer, printer, bio-metric and web camera @ of ₹1 lakh per District.
- c) Remuneration of State Coordinator @ ₹50,000 per month per State.
- d) Digitisation of old manual data @ ₹3.61 per certificate.

5.21 Regarding the mechanism of the scheme, the Department have submitted in a written reply as under:-

“Under UDID Project, UDID cards as well as certificate of disability are issued based on the assessment of disability by district medical authorities notified by respective State/UT governments. Under the project department provides financial assistance to the States/UTs for Publicity and awareness, procurement of IT Infrastructure, remuneration of State Coordinator and Digitization of Manual Certificate”.

5.22 To a query on targets set under this scheme, the Committee were informed that no Physical target are fixed in respect of UDID project However, year wise physical achievements during last three years has been provided is as under:-

F. Y.	No. of UDID cards generated (in Lakh)
2019-20	29.20
2020-21	12.67
2021-22	14.52
2022-23 (As on 12.02.2023)	18.29

5.23 The details of State/UT wise UDID cards generated/issued is given below:-

Status of UDID Project as on 08.02.2023		
Sl. No.	States/UTs	No. of e- UDID Cards Generated
1	Andaman And Nicobar Islands	5,308
2	Andhra Pradesh	11,19,294
3	Arunachal Pradesh	2,963
4	Assam	1,70,503
5	Bihar	3,94,080
6	Chandigarh	7,709
7	Chhattisgarh	2,25,428
8	Dadra Nagar Haveli And Daman And Diu	3,162
9	Delhi	40,097
10	Goa	7,506
11	Gujarat	3,42,505
12	Haryana	1,16,820
13	Himachal Pradesh	77,440
14	Jammu And Kashmir	1,02,279
15	Jharkhand	1,42,697
16	Karnataka	6,29,847
17	Kerala	2,37,003
18	Ladakh	3,317
19	Lakshadweep	912
20	Madhya Pradesh	7,67,977
21	Maharashtra	8,78,264

22	Manipur	8,835
23	Meghalaya	28,272
24	Mizoram	4,056
25	Nagaland	2,173
26	Odisha	5,76,643
27	Puducherry	19,342
28	Punjab	3,02,439
29	Rajasthan	4,79,125
30	Sikkim	4,128
31	Tamil Nadu	6,28,452
32	Telangana	4,76,159
33	Tripura	32,742
34	Uttar Pradesh	10,12,900
35	Uttarakhand	78,717
36	West Bengal	9
Total		89,29,103

5.24 In response to a query on whether the UDID is a replacement for the Certificate of Disability issued by State/Centre Governments, the Department stated in the affirmative. Since, Notification dated May 5, 2021 mandated that Disability Certificates and UDID cards were to be issued only through the portal with effect from 1st June 2021, the Committee were assured that while the UDID project is an only online process, after generation of UDID card, Department sends UDID card to address of concerned PwDs. To address the concerns of the Committee as to how the project is being implemented in rural and far flung areas with low internet coverage, the representative of the Department informed during evidence that:-

"दूर-दराज के इलाकों में जिन लोगों के पास कंप्यूटर्स नहीं हैं, वे यू डी आई डी कार्ड के लिए अपना पंजीकरण कैसे कराएंगे। मुझे आपको बताते हुए हर्ष का अनुभव हो रहा है कि ऐसी कई सारी राज्य सरकारें हैं, जिन्होंने जिला स्तर से नीचे यानी ब्लॉक स्तर पर जाकर कैंप्स लगाए हैं। उन कैंप्स में राज्य सरकार के बी डी ओ और डॉक्टर्स भी होते हैं।

राज्य सरकार के जो अधिकारी होते हैं, वे लैपटॉप, कंप्यूटर इत्यादि लेकर जाते हैं। इस कैंप का उद्देश्य यही है कि जो दूर-दराज के इलाके हैं, जिनके लिए खुद संभव नहीं है कि अपने आप पोर्टल में पंजीकरण करा सकें, ताकि उनकी समस्या का समाधान हो सके।

महोदया, आपने बायोमेट्रिक के लिए चिंता जताई है। ये तो बहुत ही जायज चिंता है। हालांकि इसके कुछ प्लस-माइनस हो सकते हैं। आज की तारीख में यू डी आई डी कार्ड बनने के लिए आधार कार्ड कंप्लसरी नहीं है। जहां तक बायोमेट्रिक की बात है, तो यू डी आई डी कार्ड में पोर्टल में जाकर अपना पंजीकरण कराएं एवं राज्य सरकार के डॉक्टर्स उसका असेसमेंट कर लें कि उसमें कौन-सी डिसेबिलिटी है एवं कितने प्रतिशत है। इसलिए बायोमेट्रिक उस हद तक आड़े नहीं आ रही है।"

5.25 The monitoring mechanism of UDID scheme is as under:-

Daily follow-up with the States/UTs /District on calls, Whatsapp Group.

- a) Initiated a colour coded daily performance report and indicated level of performance of States/UTs.
- b) Motivating lagging behind States/UTs by sharing best practice of other States/UTs.
- c) Regular letters from the level of Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment & Secretary to Chief Minister and Chief Secretary, respectively.

5.26 The Committee note that the constraints with respect to performance of the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) *inter-alia* include the adverse effect of Covid-19, non-submission of viable proposals by the Implementing Agencies, pendency of utilisation certificates, proposals not duly recommended etc. The Department are making all the efforts for achieving the targets for the year 2023-24. The Committee emphasise that SIPDA is the most comprehensive scheme for PwDs in India today and therefore call upon the Department to fortify their monitoring and coordination mechanism. As a CPMU has been set up and a Sugamya Bharat App has been launched, the Committee hope that targets

set for various schemes under SIPDA would be achieved optimally. The Committee trust that the Department would continue to take appropriate steps to boost their performance during FY 2023-24 with regard to utilisation of allocated budget by taking recourse to robust measures which would entitle them to obtain requisite Revised Estimates/funds through supplementary grants for effectively carrying out the planned activities.

5.27 The Committee find that the Accessible India Campaign under the umbrella scheme of the SIPDA is the flagship scheme of the Department. It seeks to achieve universal accessibility for persons with disabilities in Built Environment (Buildings), Transport System and Information & Communication Technology ecosystem across the country. The importance accorded to this scheme can be gauged from the fact that the Campaign is being monitored by Prime Minister Office through PRAGATI, Central Advisory Board headed by the Minister, SJE and Cabinet Secretariat through a Committee of Secretaries. Under the Central Government all 1100 identified buildings have been completed which shows lack of enthusiasm of States towards this Campaign. Under the targets for accessible transportation, the Committee find that that while all 35 International Airports have been made accessible, 55 out of 69 Domestic Airports have been made accessible In respect of Railways, 709 Type A1, A & B Railway Stations had been made fully accessible. In terms of the road transport sector the Committee found that 5.96% buses are fully accessible and 29.05% of buses are currently partially accessible. The Committee wish to stress that the AIC presents a gateway to better mobility and reach to ensure equality in opportunities and the promise of a better life for PwDs. The Committee are also of the opinion that accessibility does not, merely mean access to the point of entrance of a building, public transport system etc. Rather it implies that a person with disability has access, equal to all others, to all sections and not restricted by

his or her disabilities. The Committee feel that the challenges before PwDs are immense and therefore prudent strategies need to be chalked out to remove the impediments to fully achieve the intended objectives of the scheme within the intended timelines. The Committee desire to be informed about the progress made in this direction.

5.28 The Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Government in issuing 89.29 lakh Unique Disability Identity (UDID) Cards so far in the country. The Committee note that the Unique Identification Card is a single document of identification and verification of the disabled for availing various benefits in the future. The entire process of application is only available in online mode and that the persons in remote and rural areas of low connectivity may be denied the benefits of the scheme, the Committee were happy to find that efforts are being made by the Department to personally reach these people at their location through their network to get them enrolled under the scheme and that even the persons have less than 40% disability are also being considered for issuing the cards. Another laudable initiative has been the despatch of physical UDID cards by SpeedPost which ensures better accountability. The Committee also appreciate that UDID card is available under the DigiLocker App saving PwDs the trouble of carrying the physical card. The Committee feel that all these steps are in the right direction and encourage the Department to explore other innovative methods of increasing the coverage under UDID. The Committee also suggest that appropriate publicity be given to this scheme to increase the coverage especially in rural areas where a large majority of the disabled reside.

5.29 The Committee drew the attention to the difficulties faced by those Divyangjan who are unable to get their Aadhaar card made due to the fact that owing to particular type of disability, they are unable to mark their finger prints for registration purpose. When enquired about any remedy for

such cases, it was informed that there is a provision of 'Bio-metric exception' for such Divyangjan desirous of obtaining Aadhaar Cards for themselves. Hence, the Committee desire that during the meetings of the Central Advisory Board with representatives of the States, the issue may be flagged and the implementation authorities are urged to use the Bio-metric exception for facilitating such Divyangjan in obtaining their Aadhaar cards.

CHAPTER-VI

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) FOR SKILL TRAINING OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Under this component, the Department launched the National Action Plan (NAP) for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in March, 2015 with the main objective to provide skill training to PwDs for enabling them to become self-reliant and productive members of the society and to integrate them with the mainstream of the society. Implemented across the country under which training is conducted via a network of empanelled training partners (ETPs) comprising Government organizations (including organizations of the Department such as NHFDC, NIs/CRCs) and Non-Govt. Organizations (NGOs). 25502 PwDs has been placed under National Action Plan after the training.

6.2 The main objectives & Coverage of the scheme have been enumerated as under:-

The guidelines cover Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with not less than 40% disability and having a disability certificate to this effect issued by a competent medical authority,

- a) As an Endeavour to encourage women, 30% of the total intake of each training program has been earmarked for women candidates,
- b) The skill training is provided through training partners empanelled by this Department as per the eligibility conditions contained herein.

6.3 The scheme is implemented through the implementing organizations/ institutions where financial assistance is provided by way of Grant-in-Aid for organizing training programs to the following categories of organizations:

- (a) Departments of the States Governments/Union Territories,
- (b) Autonomous Bodies/Statutory Bodies/Public Sector Undertakings set up by Central/ State Governments/UTs Administrations including Central/State Universities,
- (c) National institutes/CRCs/DDRCs/RCs/Outreach Centres under MSJ&E, or

(d) Organizations registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860, or Indian Trusts Act, 1882 or Companies Act, 1956 who are recognized for skill training by Central/ State Government Departments or subordinate bodies there-under.

6.4 The BE , RE and AE for the last three years alongwith BE for 2023-24 for National Action Plan are as under:-

Year	BE (₹ in Cr)	RE (₹ in Cr)	AE (₹ in Cr)	Physical Target	Achievement
2020-21	77	30	4.49	8500	2,918
2021-22	80.85	36	4.07	22,000	2911
2022-23	55.5	36	5.73	17000	2391(as on 31.01.2023)
2023-24	56			17000	

6.5 As would be seen from above, under the NAP for Training of Persons with Disabilities, for the Short Term Training Programme, the physical targets for the FY 2020-21 was to train 8500 persons but the achievement was 2918 only. For 2021-22 the target was enhanced more than 2.5 times to 22,000, but the achievement remained abysmally low at 2911. However, the target for 2022-23, though reduced to 17000, also stands at 2391(as on 31.01.2023). In light of the dismal performance of the Department the Committee desired to know the reasons and whether the targets were kept very ambitious. In reply, the Department submitted as follows:-

Year	Remarks for shortfall
2020-21	Owing to COVID-19 related restrictions, training commencement could not begin before late August, 2020.
2021-22	Validation of training centres made mandatory and allocation of targets and commencement of training was allowed only after centres validated by SCPwD or under SMART.
2022-23	Training under new project was not allowed for those ETPs which had not completed previous project. Due to the requirement for releasing of funds through (Central Nodal Agency(CNA) which was finalised during the month of August-September only.

6.6 To address the identified issues and streamline the implementation of skill training of PwDs, the Department is taking various initiatives *viz.*,

Preparation of courses/curriculum based on the contemporary job demand in coordination with Sector Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD),

- a) MOU with the various E-Commerce Companies like Amazon, Flipkart for placement of PwDs on Recruit-Train-Deploy (RTD) model, Non-Government Organizations like Youth4jobs, Saarthak, Swaraj Ability to jointly provide skill training and employment opportunities to PwDs in E-commerce sector and increase the placement opportunities of trained PwDs.
- b) Funding pattern was rationalized to avoid parking of fund. Centre guidelines were introduced to strengthen the training centres, Biometric attendance and inspections etc.
- c) The skill training initiative will also be linked to NHFDC loan facilities so that the trained PwDs get the financial support instantly to start their business.
- d) Release of grant-in-aid from Project wise mode to Batch wise mode.
- e) Commencement of training only at centres validated by SCPwD or under SMART
- f) National Action Plan(NAP) under SIPDA will be implemented through PM-DAKSH Portal. After on-boarding on PM-DAKSH, PwD beneficiary will be able to apply directly for Training Programme. Overall training and placement will be monitored on PM-DAKSH portal.

6.7 The Committee note that National Action Plan (NAP) for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) was launched in March, 2015 to provide skill training to PwDs for enabling them to become self reliant and productive and to integrate them with the mainstream of the society. The skilling of PwDs assumes considerable significance in helping them seek gainful employment resulting in their financial empowerment. The Committee are of the considered opinion that the purpose of imparting training and certifying the candidates and to enhance employment skills for the section of society perceived as most unemployable, should not suffer for want of necessary procedural formalities of validation of training centres and setting up of a CNA for the Scheme for PFMS monitoring. Hence, the

Department are urged to focus on faster decisions at all levels so as to leverage the placement/self-employment of the trained/certified candidates to a sizeable extent as well as to maximize utilisation of the earmarked funds apart from appointing a CNA for monitoring purposes. In view of the fact that Skill training under NAP is a critical component and focal point for effective implementation of SIPDA, the Committee urge the Department to follow up the measures initiated so as to ensure maximum involvement of the district machinery as well as efficient centralized monitoring. The Committee further find that the Department is taking initiatives like collaborating with e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart and tying up with NGOs and other organizations to not only impart training but also for placement of the trained candidates. The Department was also mooting approaching industry organizations like CII, FII, ASSOCHAM etc to extend mentorship for such training programmes. While this is very welcome step, the Committee would like to be kept informed of any actions taken in this regard.

6.8 The Committee desire the Department to organize effective awareness campaigns in tandem with the State/UT Governments and other stakeholders, to educate the target group about the long term benefits of the scheme so as to persuade and mobilize them to get themselves enrolled under the immensely gainful scheme. The Committee would also like the Department to create a mechanism to track candidates placed across all the schemes, for at least one year, post completion of training/certification/orientation to gauge their placement/self employment proportion and the effectiveness of the training imparted. Based on the findings and feedback from beneficiaries, the Department can take remedial measures as required.

CHAPTER-VII

DEENDAYAL DIVYANGJAN REHABILITATION SCHEME (DDRS)

The Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme is a Central Sector scheme of the Department to provide grant-in-aid to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities aimed at enabling them to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or socio-functional levels. The Scheme is being implemented since 1999 with the objective of ensuring effective implementation of the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Grant-in-Aid (GIA) is provided through e-Anudaan portal of the Department. Financial assistance is provided to the Implementing Agencies through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and the implementing agencies have to report expenditure through Expenditure Advance Transfer (EAT) Module.

7.2 The Objectives of the DDRS is enumerated as follows:-

To provide grant-in-aid to NonGovernmental Organizations (NGOs) for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or socio-functional levels

- i. To create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice and empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- ii. To encourage voluntary action for ensuring effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

7.3 Under the scheme the following eight (08) model projects are being implemented:-

Cross Disability Pre-Schools and Early Intervention with provision for Home-Based Rehabilitation and Community-Based Rehabilitation Project

- a) Special School for the Children with Hearing Disability with option for Home Based Rehabilitation and Community-Based Rehabilitation Project

- b) Special School for the Children with Visual Disability (including Deaf and blindness) with option for Home Based Rehabilitation and Community-Based Rehabilitation Project and Low Vision Centre Project.
- c) Special School for the children with other disabilities (ID/CP/ASD/MD/ Muscular Dystrophy, Deaf, blindness etc) with option for Home Based Rehabilitation and Community-Based Rehabilitation Project
- d) Rehabilitation of Leprosy Cured Persons with option for Home-Based Rehabilitation & Community-Based Rehabilitation Project
- e) Half Way Home for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Treated and Controlled individuals with Mental Illness with option for Home-Based Rehabilitation & Community-Based Rehabilitation Project
- f) Preparatory / Remediation Centre for Children with Specific Learning Disabilities to continue Inclusive Education Project (Newly Introduced Model Project)
- g) Cross-Disability Therapy and Counseling Centre Project

District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC)

7.4 DDRC Scheme is a sub component under the DDRS scheme from 2019-20. Main functions of DDRCs are early identification and intervention, awareness generation, assessment of need/provision/fitment of assistive devices, therapeutic services e.g. Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, etc., referral and arrangement of surgical correction, assistance in providing scholarships, skill training, arrangement of loans for self-employment, survey & identification of persons with disabilities through camp approach, assisting in the issue of UDID Cards, and to act as outreach centres for the services provided by the National Institutes and for promoting barrier free environment. Presently all districts of the country are authorized to establish DDRC. Regarding the status of establishment of DDRCs in the country, the Committee were informed that in the 325 approved Districts, 269 DDRCs have been set up, of which only 55-60 DDRCs are currently functional.

7.5 The Budgetary allocation under the Scheme alongwith target/achievements for the last 3 years are as follows:-

Year	BE (₹in Cr)	RE (₹in Crore)	AE (₹ in Crores)	Physical Target	Achievement
2020-21	130.00	85.00	83.18	43270	31542
2021-22	125.00	105.00	100.90	40000	30173
2022-23	125.00	105.00	58.60	40000	21230
2023-24	130.00			40000	

7.6 The reasons for mismatch between BE, RE and Actuals since 2020-21 have been stated as under:-

“During the spread of pandemic COVID-19, there had been shortfall in physical and financial target achievement due to less expenditure in NE component and deduction in certain cost norms in the component of the scheme due to closure of projects in COVID pandemic resulting in lesser average grant of each project for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 which further resulted in reduction of target. Number of Model projects were also reduced from 18 to 9 in the revised scheme effective from 1st April, 2018 which resulted in less release and less beneficiaries than expected. During the current year 2022-23, actual expenditure as on 14.02.2023 is ₹66.34 crore and proposals worth ₹15 crore are in pipeline. It is expected that department shall achieve the physical and financial target by the end of the current FY 2020-23.”

7.7 Asked to enumerate the ameliorative steps being taken for realisation of the objectives of the scheme by the Department, the following information has been submitted:-

A Third Party Evaluation has been conducted in 2018-19 by M/s Academy of Management Studies(AMS), Lucknow and another in 2020-21 by National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development(NILERD), New Delhi. Recommendations have already been incorporated in the revised scheme guidelines made effective from 01.04.2022 to improve the scheme, wherever feasible.

- a. Training sessions/ help through telephonic calls regarding use of Expenditure Actual Transfer (EAT) Module on Public Financial Management System (PFMS) are regularly provided to sensitize Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs).
- b. Simplification of online form has been introduced by reducing the no. of fields to be filled up by auto population. These efforts have resulted in simplification of use of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and Expenditure Actual

Transfer (EAT) module by the Programme implementing agencies, facilitating early release of Grant in Aid. Also implementing agencies are able to understand various new components of the revised scheme.

- c. The Department has set up a Central Programme Monitoring Unit (CPMU), which is mainly created for inspection and close monitoring of the projects of the scheme. The PMU team/members will conduct surprise inspection of PIAs and will monitor the performance and quality of services rendered by the PIA. They will assist the Program Division in giving the overall performance of the PIAs.

7.8 Procedures for monitoring the Scheme are as under:-

Grant released only on receipt of Utilization Certificate in respect of previous grant given to that organisation.

- a) Respective State Governments/UT Administrations monitor and conduct inspection of the organisations receiving grant under the Scheme.
- b) Department also conducts inspection from time to time of NGOs getting grants under the Scheme through its National Institutes and officers of the Department.
- c) All applications by NGOs seeking Grant-in-aid (GIA) under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) are being invited through on-line e-anudaan portal of the Ministry
- d) The Department has set up a Central Programme Monitoring Unit (CPMU), which is mainly created for inspection and close monitoring of the projects of the scheme. The PMU members will conduct surprise inspection of PIAs and will monitor the performance and quality of services rendered by PIAs .

7.9 The Committee find that under DDRS, funds are released to NGOs for projects of Special Schools, rehabilitation centres, preparatory schools, cross disability pre-schools, early interventions centres, etc. relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities aimed at enabling them to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or socio-functional levels. The Committee have been assured by the Department of full utilization in the current financial. They therefore urge the Department to intensify their efforts in removing the recurring impediments which have been hampering the implementation of the DDRS and ensure maximum achievement of financial and physical targets.

CHAPTER-VIII

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Section 31 (1) & (2) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates that every child with benchmark disability between the age of six to eighteen years shall have the right to free education in a neighborhood school, or in a special school, of his choice and the appropriate Government and local authorities shall ensure their access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years. To fulfill this mandate the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) is implementing the Central Sector Umbrella Scheme of Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. The main objectives of these scholarship schemes are to empower students with disabilities to study further in order to prepare themselves for earning their livelihood and find a dignified place for themselves in the society, as they face several barriers-physical, financial, psychological in pursuing studies and living a dignified life.

8.2 The Scholarship Schemes being implemented by the Department are:-

National Fellowship (For M.Phil./Ph.D. in Indian Universities)

- a) Pre-Matric (For Classes IX & X)
- b) Post-Matric (For Classes XI to Post-graduate degree/diploma)
- c) National Overseas Scholarship (For Master's Degree/Doctorate's in universities abroad)
- d) Top Class Education (For Post-graduate degree/diploma in notified institutes of excellence) and
- e) Free Coaching (For appearing in competitive examinations for Government jobs for Group A,B and C posts and admission to technical and professional courses).

8.3 It has been informed that 50% of the total scholarship slots available each year in Pre-matric, Post-matric and Top Class Education and 30% slots in National Overseas Scholarship are reserved for girl candidates. However, in case adequate number of girl candidates are not available or not found eligible as per the terms and conditions of the scheme, the unutilized slots are being utilized by selecting suitable male candidates.

8.4 Regarding the eligibility criteria for scholarship it has been stated that it is (i) open to Indian nationals only and (ii) Students having 40% and above disability (certified by competent medical authority of the State Government/UTs). Regarding the Mode of implementation of this scheme the Committee was informed as under:-

“(i) The first three scholarship schemes, *i.e.*, Pre-matric, Post-matric and Top Class Education Scholarships for Students with Disabilities are implemented through the National Scholarship Portal (www.scholarships.gov.in) and the scholarship amount is remitted directly to the beneficiaries through PFMS portal.

(ii) National Fellowship for SwDs is implemented through UGC portal. The selection of candidates is done by UGC and list of the selected candidates is forwarded to the Department. DEPwD is responsible for disbursement of funds to the beneficiaries identified by the UGC. The fellowship amount is remitted into the beneficiary’s bank account through Canara Bank.

(iii) National Overseas Scholarship for Students with Disabilities is implemented offline by the DEPwD with the help of Ministry of External Affairs. Applications are shortlisted by a Screening Committee and short-listed applications are placed before the Selection Committee for award of National Overseas Scholarship. The Scholarship amount including tuition fees is transferred to candidate’s bank account after the student gets admission to a foreign university.

(iv) Guidelines for Free Coaching Scholarship Schemes of the Department is under review and proposed to be implemented in online mode on the pattern of similar Free Coaching Scholarship Schemes being implemented in Department of Social Justice & Empowerment. Further, it has been decided in the meeting with IF Division that the slots for free coaching may be utilized in other component of umbrella scholarship scheme.”

8.5 Regarding the income ceiling for availing benefits under this scheme , the Department provided the following information:-

S.No.	Name of Scheme	Parental annual income ceiling (₹.)
1	Pre-matric Scholarship for students with disabilities for Class IX and X	2.50 lakh
2	Post-matric Scholarship for students with disabilities for Class XI to Post-graduate degree /Diploma level.	2.50 lakh
3	Scholarship for Top Class Education for Graduate and Post-Graduate Degree/Diploma in 240 notified institutions of excellence in education	8.00 lakh
4	National Fellowship for pursuing M.Phil/Ph.D in Indian Universities	No income ceiling
5	National Overseas Scholarships for pursuing Master's degree and Doctorate degree in universities abroad.	8.00 lakh
6	Free Coaching for Students with Disabilities for recruitment examinations for Group A, B & C and entrance examinations for admission in technical and professional courses.	8.00 lakh

8.6 As regards the Budget Estimate (BE) & Revised Estimate (RE) the Actual utilisation thereof and physical targets and achievements from 2020-21 to 2023-24, the following information was furnished to the Committee:-

Year	BE (₹in Cr)	RE (₹in Crore)	AE (₹ in Crore)	Physical Target	Achievement
2020-21	125.00	100.00	97.40	44520	26067
2021-22	125.00	110.00	120.32	44520	42131
2022-23	105.00	145.00	88.04(as on 13.02.2023)	44520	23552(as on 24.01.2023)
2023-24	155.00			44520	

8.7 This is one of the few schemes that had an enhanced allocation at the RE Stage during 2022-23, however the current spending is to the tune of ₹88.04 (as on 13.02.2023). To a query whether the financial targets would be met especially since

only around 60 percent of the allocation have been utilised so far, the Department submitted as under

“हम 44,520 का पूरा टारगेट अचीव करेंगे। हमारा यह पोर्टल 31 जनवरी, 2023 को बंद हुआ है। इसका वेरिफिकेशन होता है। हमारे पास जितने बच्चे हैं, उन सभी को स्कॉलरशिप दिया जाएगा। गत वर्ष हमारा बजट 105 था, उसे हमने आर.ई. में 145 करवाया है। हम पिछले साल से ज्यादा अचीव करने वाले हैं।”

8.8 As regards monitoring guidelines put in place, the Committee were informed that Pre-matric, Post-matric, Top Class Education are on-boarded on National Scholarship Portal and monitoring mechanism is run by NSP through re-validation of applications, sanity check, check on de-duplication etc, National Overseas Scholarship Scheme is offline through DEPwD and National Fellowship for PwDs (NFPwD) is online through Canara bank online portal.

8.9 The Committee appreciate the performance under the scheme for scholarship for Students with disabilities. It is one of the few schemes where performance of the Department has been exceptional. During 2020-21, while the percentage of expenditure was almost 98 percent, the following year *i.e* 2021-22, there was overachievement where they managed to spend ₹120.32 cr against RE of ₹110.00 cr. For the current financial year, the Committee have been assured of a similar performance. In respect of physical targets, while the Covid 19 impacted and lockdown period of 2020-21 saw a shortfall in the number of beneficiaries, the following year the Department appears to have recouped the losses and the achievement almost matched the targets. In view of the assurances given by the Department that expenditure for the current financial will not only match RE, but also exceed the amount, the Committee are of the opinion that allocations for scholarship should be strengthened and the Department should approach the Ministry of Finance for further augmentation of the outlay. The Committee are of the strong opinion that providing monetary

support acts as a safety net for students with Disabilities which also arrests the dropout rate and gives them an impetus to remain within the educational system .The Committee desire that the momentum created so far be persisted with and periodic assessment of the scheme be carried out so that any corrective actions if required can be initiated at the earliest. As the guidelines for Free Coaching Scholarship Schemes for students with disabilities are under review, they urge the Department to expedite the finalization of the guidelines so that the scheme can be rolled out at the earliest and beneficiaries can increase their employability through coaching/training/guidance. The Committee would like to be kept informed of all decisions taken in this regard.

CHAPTER-IX

CENTRE FOR DISABILITY SPORTS

The main objective of the Centres for Disability Sports are to provide Persons with Disabilities the training facilities at par with the latest in the world so as to enable them to effectively compete and win medals in Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics and other International events for Sportspersons with Disabilities. Cabinet approval for establishment of a Centre for Disability Sports in Gwalior (M.P.) with an estimated cost of ₹170.99 crore (₹151.16 crore + ₹19.83 crore) was received in 2019. Construction work of the Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior is underway, which is likely to be completed by June, 2023. A separate proposal for establishment of Centre for disability Sports at Shillong is under consideration of the Department.

9.2 Asked to state the objectives of this initiative and how would it prove to be beneficial to PwDs in the country, the Department have submitted as under:-

“At present, no specialized sports training facilities for Divyangjan exist in the country. This void is proposed to be filled up by setting up sports infrastructure so that these persons can undergo rigorous and specialized training in these Centres. The proposed two Centres should make it possible for Divyangjan to access training within a reasonable distance from places where they ordinarily reside. At the macro level, the proposal is expected to help build up confidence and develop a sense of belonging in Divyangjan to facilitate their integration in society.”

9.3 In terms of facilities proposed to be provided at the Centre, the Committee were informed that the Centre will be equipped with an Outdoor Athletic Stadium, Indoor Sports Complex, Basement Parking Facility. The Aquatic Centre will have one covered Pool and an Outdoor Pool. Other facilities include High Performance Centre with classrooms; medical facilities; Sports Science Centre; hostel facilities for athletes, support facilities including accessible lockers, dining, recreational amenities and

Administrative Block. The Centre will have provision for training, selection, sports academics and research, medical support, spectator galleries and suitable for holding national/international events. The Sport disciplines identified for training are Badminton, Basketball, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Judo, Taekwondo, Fencing and Rugby Boccia, Goalball, Football 5 a side, Para Dance Sport and Para Power Lifting, Athletics, Archery, Football 7 a side, Tennis and Swimming.

9.4 For overall superintendence and supervision of the Centre, a Governing Body under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (DEPwD), with some serving in *ex-officio* capacity and others coming in as experts from National Level Sports Federations apart from experts in para games has been constituted. For monitoring the implementation of the project, a Project Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, DEPwD has been constituted.

9.5 Regarding, the progress of construction it has been informed that while financial progress so far is ₹89.71cr which is 81.75% as on 13.2.2022, Physical progress is 71.75%. The projected date of completion of the project is March 2023.

9.6 Regarding the status of the of the establishment of Centre for disability Sports at Shillong, the Committee were apprised that the Government of Meghalaya has allotted 50 acres of land for the Centre for Disability Sports at Shillong, Meghalaya. The DPR for the Centre has submitted by the consultant engaged for the purpose. The draft DPR is being examined by the Department and the consultant has been asked to incorporate the suggestions made by the Committee and submit the final DPR at the earliest.

9.7 The representative of the Department appended this information by stating before the Committee as under:-

"शिलांग वाला सेंटर अभी डी पी आर स्टेज पर है, जो कि लगभग बन गई है। इसकी विभिन्न स्तर पर चर्चा चल रही है। इस तरह के सेंटर बार-बार नहीं बनते हैं तो माननीय सचिव महोदय ने निर्देश दिया है कि ग्लोबल लेवल पर सेंटर अच्छे होने चाहिए। दुनिया में जहां अच्छे स्टेडियम बनाए गए हैं, हम उनका अध्ययन करा रहे हैं। ओडिशा में हॉकी

इंटरनेशनल चैम्पियनशिप हुई थी। उसे भी हम ध्यान में रख रहे हैं। विश्व में जहां ओलम्पिक्स और पेरा ओलिम्पिक्स हुए हैं, हम उनको भी ध्यान में रख रहे हैं। हम एक कॉम्प्रिहेन्सिव डी पी आर बनाना चाहते हैं।”

9.8 The Committee are happy to note that in keeping with the aim for inclusion of PwDs in all walks of life , the Cabinet had granted approval for 2 Centres For Disability Sports at Gwalior and Shillong respectively. The Committee find that the centre at Gwalior is slated for completion by June 2023 and the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the centre at Shillong is statedly under preparation. The Committee would like to highlight that the North Eastern region of India has a rich tradition of sports and the development of a sports centre in the region will go a long way in encouraging the participation of Sportspersons in national and international sports. The Committee therefore recommend that the DPR for the Shillong Centre and other preparations be completed fast so that the exercise of securing the necessary permissions, allocations etc may begin in right earnest.

CHAPTER-X

NATIONAL HANDICAPPED FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NHFDC)

The National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation(NHFDC) is a not for profit company incorporated on 24th January, 1997 under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (section 8 of companies Act, 2013), working as an Apex Corporation for the benefit of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)/Divyangjan.NHFDC is wholly owned by Government of India and has an authorized share capital of ₹499.50 crore and paid up share capital of ₹399.07 crore. The main objectives of the Corporation are to promote economic developmental activities for the benefit of the PwDs and to extend loans to the PwDs for self-employment and higher education etc. It has already released loan assistance to the tune of ₹1,435 Crore for the benefit of over 2.31 Lakh PwDs the Corporation has been instrumental in imparting of Skill development training over 91,000 PwDs involving ₹98 crore. Further, the Corporation has taken initiatives for providing business connect to PwDs by providing marketing platform (online/offline).

Credit Based Activities

10.2 NHFDC offers financial assistance in the form of concessional loans on convenient terms to all eligible Indian Citizens with 40% or more disability and aged above 18 years. The details of loan assistance, interest rate and repayment period under various schemes are as under:-

S. No.	Scheme	Max. loan	Interest rate payable by Beneficiary	Maximum loan repayment period
1	Divyangjan Swablamban Yojana	50.0 lakh	4-9% p.a	10 years
2	Vishesh Microfinance Yojana	₹ 60,000	12.5 % p a	03 years

It may be noted that a rebate of 1% in interest is allowed to women with disabilities/persons with disabilities other than OH in self-employment loans of up to ₹50,000/- under Divyangjan Swavlamban Yojana. The rebate is borne by NHFDC.

Non Credit Based Activities

NHFDC also provides funds and organizes various activities in the interest of persons with disabilities to achieve its mandate. These are:-

(a) Skill Training:

- NHFD provides skill development trainings under SIPDA scheme of Government of India, to PwDs (not less than 40% disability) between 15-59 years of age in order to make them capable and self-dependent through proper technical training in the field of traditional and technical occupations and entrepreneurship. Financial assistance in the form of grant is provided to Empanelled training partners/reputed institutions for imparting training to the disabled persons. NHFDC also provide stipend during training programmes, as per the prescribed Government norms.

(b) Awareness Creation & Marketing Support

- Awareness Creation: NHFDC reimburses expenses made for publicity/awareness creation on its schemes by the implementing agencies. Here, amount up to ₹50,000 /- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only) per year or 0.10% of the amount disbursed by the implementing agencies in the immediately preceding financial year, whichever is higher is considered.

- Marketing Support: NHFDC extends assistance to Persons with Disabilities in marketing their products. PwDs are regularly sponsored to participate in various exhibitions. NHFDC also facilitate online and offline marketing of Products of PwDs to enhance their business reach.

10.3 The Notional Allocation *vis-a-vis* Achievement and number of beneficiaries covered under NHFDC schemes are given as under:-

(₹ In crore)

2020-21			2021-22			2022-23(upto 23.01.2023)		
Notional Allocation	Achievement	No. of Benef.	Notional Allocation	Achievement	No. of Benef.	Notional Allocation	Achievement	No. of Benef.
266.99	133.61	18326	309.96	112.74	16713	348.9	82.86	12405

10.4 To a query on the plan of action on the part of the Department/NHFDC to cater to the growing needs of PwDs since a greater number of disabilities have been included under the RPwD Act, 2016, the Department have enumerated the following initiatives/steps to extend the coverage of PwDs:-

(i) Amalgamation all loan schemes:

NHFDC has revisited its schemes and Guidelines to enhance its effectiveness and extend the outreach. NHFDC introduced new Guidelines for Credit Based Funding and amalgamated all existing loan schemes (self-employment & education loan scheme) into a single loan scheme called Divyangjan Swablamban Yojana to enhance its effectiveness and reach to the persons with disabilities. NHFDC has enhanced upper loan limit from ₹25.0 lakh to ₹50.00 lakh. Education loan limit from ₹10.0 lakh to ₹50.00 lakh has been enhanced and repayment period from 7 years to ₹10 years has also been enhanced.

(ii) Enhancement in the upper loan limit for persons with mental retardation: NHFDC has enhanced upper loan limit from ₹10.0 lakh to ₹50.00 lakh for persons with mental retardation.

(iii) Delegation of Authority in favour of Implementing Agencies

The authority to sanction /release loan to the beneficiary under NHFDC scheme has been delegated in favour of implementing agencies for loan upto ₹50.0 lakh per project. It is likely to quicken the process of lending. Since, the implementing agencies operate at ground level, they don't have to wait for any approval of NHFDC, in the matter of lending to Persons with Disabilities.

(iv) Enhancement of activities area:

Activities area covered under NHFDC schemes have been enhanced. Now, PwDs can apply for loan for starting any activity contributing directly or indirectly in the income generation or helping PwD in their overall process of empowerment like wash loan for financing drinking water facilities and sanitation facilities including construction/ refurbishment of household toilets and water improvements etc. Biogas plant, Housing, solar panels, Assistive device etc.

(v) Vishesh Microfinance Yojana:

NHFDC has modified Vishesh Microfinance Yojana for persons with disabilities for providing prompt and need based finance at reasonable rate of interest through NBFC-MFI, Section-8-MFI, and NGO-MFI, SHG Federations, state Government Missions and other state organizations to pursue small/micro business and developmental activities.

(vi) Enhancement in Utilisation period:

Utilisation period has been enhanced from 90 days to 120 days, allowing implementing agencies sufficient time for grounding of the project. The Implementing Agencies are required to furnish utilization of funds lent to it, in the prescribed format within the aforesaid period of 120 days of the date of release of funds.

(xii) Education Loan (upto ₹50 lakhs) : at nominal interest @ 4% p.a

To encourage students with disabilities pursue higher education/studies (in India as well as abroad), the Corporation provides loan assistance at the nominal interest of 4% per annum.

(xiii) Pilot projects

(a) Swavalamban Kendra (SK):

The Corporation intended to create state of the art infrastructure for skilling of PwDs. Loan assistance was made available to enterprising PwDs in hinterlands of the country for establishment of SK. The Corporation is developing /nurturing SHGs around these SKs. The Corporation also supports these SKs in revenue generation by converging the credit needs, skilling needs, assured business linkage.

(b) Promoting unique business models for inclusive growth:-

The Corporation has extended loan assistance to PwDs for commercial vehicle. It also provided the business connect for these vehicles by roping in a vehicle aggregator, who trains, employs women for driving the vehicle.

The PwD financed by NHFDC gets assured income out of the deployment of vehicle through business connect provided by NHFDC. The same also gives employment to women drivers, thereby contributing to the empowerment of women. It also facilitates safe taxi for people in the NCR Region & Indore.

The Corporation is prepared to experiment with new projects/business models with the objective of empowerment of PwDs.

(ix) Online Marketing of Products of PwD Entrepreneurs:

The Corporation has taken initiative to directly support the PwD entrepreneurs in marketing their goods and services by aggregation of their products/services through online marketing platform. Some of the products made by PwDs are now available on leading e-marketing platform.

(x) Tie-ups with Bank:

NHFDC has signed MoU with Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of Baroda and IDBI Bank and 17 Regional Rural Banks for extending concessional credit to PwDs under NHFDC scheme. This affords an alternative window for the PwDs to access the financial assistance under NHFDC schemes.

(xi) Tie up with Rural Livelihood Mission:

NHFDC has initiated dialogues with various Rural Livelihood Mission for financing SHGs of PwDs for various livelihood supports.

10.5 The State-wise beneficiaries details for the last five years (2017-18 to 2021-22) is as under:-

(upto 31.01.2023)

S.	State	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1	Arunchal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	1	2
2	Andhra Pradesh	700	1	6764	1098	0	3000
3	Assam	50	0	0	0	1	22
4	Bihar	0	4	2	0	1	2
5	Chandigarh	18	37	30	7	9	10
6	Chhattisgarh	827	827		0	119	0
7	Delhi	23	13	29	2	85	152
8	Goa	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Gujarat	300	150	351	51	378	1
10	Haryana	1311	1300	3	1316	1309	303

11	Himachal	200	250	300	400	500	500
12	Jammu & Kashmir	254	624	976	144	737	615
13	Jharkhand	301	102	100	5	100	55
14	Karnataka	0	1	1	1	0	4
15	Kerala	525	705	1055	4504	2254	0
16	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	40	0	20
17	Madhya Pradesh	1	1	3	86	36	24
18	Manipur	0	19	0	0	0	0
19	Maharashtra	6	5	3	1	2	3
20	Meghalaya	50	35	50	20	50	0
21	Mizoram	0	0	0	20	21	0
22	Nagaland	0	0	0	0	2	0
23	Odisha	20	0	0	1	1	0
24	Puducherry	300	0	0	0	0	0
25	Punjab	12	84	136	113	107	116
26	Rajasthan	250	813	1017	601	1202	3
27	Sikkim	100	50		21	50	25
28	Tamil Nadu	6000	4002	5001	6000	6000	6000
29	Telangana	0	1		3485	3485	
30	Tripura	100	50	0	70	0	55
31	Uttar Pradesh	369	2104	2075	337	263	1513
32	Uttarkhand	50	42	37	1	0	3
33	West Bengal	0	1	2	2	0	0
	Total	11767	11221	17935	18326	16713	12428

10.6 The Committee note that NHFDC administers two loan schemes viz Divyangjan Swavlamban Yojana for loans upto ₹50.00 lakh and Vishesh Microfinance Yojana for loans upto ₹60,000. The Committee further note that since 2020-21, the organization is no longer receiving funds from the Government. The Committee find that the coverage of loans of the NHFDC is spread across several States. The Committee have been apprised about the steps initiated by the NHFDC as part of their efforts to improve their performance. Taking into account the crucial need to augment creation of gainful employment opportunities for the intended beneficiaries, the Committee desire that the measures so initiated be pursued vigorously so as to achieve the desired end results. The Committee also recommend that the Department should strengthen the monitoring mechanism to assess the requirement and sustainability of loans forwarded so as to ensure increased fund disbursement and utilisation to effectively meet the requirements of the intended beneficiaries. The Committee further recommend that the performance of the Implementing agencies be constantly monitored with an aim to encourage due diligence and proper utilisation of the loan amount disbursed.

**New Delhi
22nd March, 2023
1 Chaitra, 1945 (Saka)**

**SMT. RAMA DEVI
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Social
Justice and Empowerment**

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2022-23) (DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES) ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2023-24) HELD ON THURSDAY, THE 16th FEBRUARY, 2023

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1645 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Thomas Chazhikadan
3. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
4. Smt. Rangeeta Koli
5. Smt. Geeta Kora
6. Shri Akshaibar Lal

Rajya Sabha

7. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
8. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
9. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
10. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
11. Shri Narayan Koragappa
12. Shri Ramji
13. Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Anita Bhatt Panda | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Ved Prakash Nauriyal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Smt. Mamta Kemwal | - | Director |
| 4. | Shri Krishendra Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

WITNESSES

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Rajesh Aggarwal | Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Sanjay Pandey | Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser |
| 3. | Shri Rajesh Kumar Yadav | Joint Secretary |
| 4. | Shri Rajeev Sharma | Joint Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary and other officers representing the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to the sitting of the Committee convened to discuss 'Demands for Grants for 2023-24'.

3. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson observed that during the last three years the Department was not able to spend even the allocation which was revised downward at RE stage and asked whether any assessment of reasons has been done in this regard. She also inquired about the reasons due to which the budgetary estimates for 2023-24 were increased very insignificantly in comparison to 2022-23 particularly when Department proposes to improve the performance of Schemes and Institutions. She also observed that the budgetary allocation based on the 2011 census is not appropriate as the population of Disabled has increased multiple times. Among other things she also inquired about the reduced allocation under SIPDA for 2023-24 in comparison 2022-23.

4. The Chairperson then drew attention of the representatives of the Department to Direction 55 (1) of the 'Directions by the Speaker of Lok Sabha' about maintaining confidentiality of the proceedings of the Committee until the report is presented to the House and asked the representatives of the Department to introduced themselves.

5. Thereupon, the Secretary and the Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser, after the introduction by the representatives of the Department, briefed the Committee with the help of a Power Point Presentation. In the briefing, the Committee were informed about the overall performance of the Department including budgetary allocations, actual expenditure incurred/ physical targets achieved under various Schemes/ Programmes during 2022-23. They also informed about the Projections/ targets for various Schemes of the Department for the welfare of the disabled.

6. In the deliberation that followed, the Committee discussed the following issues:-

- (i) Optimum utilisation of funds in all the four quarters of the fiscal year;
- (ii) Estimates of PwDs data for realistic allocation of resources and formulation of targets;

- (iii) Strengthening system of enrollment and distribution of UDID cards;
- (iv) Modernisation of ALIMCO;
- (v) Increase in the coverage of DDRS/DDRCs;
- (vi) Revision of Income limits for availing facilities targeted at PwDs;
- (vii) Establishment of Sports Centres for PwDs; and
- (vii) Scholarship for Students with Disabilities.

7. The Chairperson, then thanked the Secretary and other representatives of the Department for providing valuable information on the subject and also asked the Secretary to furnish written replies on the issues that remained unanswered during the sitting.

A copy of the verbatim proceedings of the sitting has been kept on record.

The witnesses then withdrew.

(The Committee then adjourned)

**MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2022-23) HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
22ND MARCH, 2023**

The Committee met from 1030 hrs. to 1100 hrs. in Chairperson's Chamber, Room No. 113, PHA Extension Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
3. Smt. Pramila Bisoyi
4. Shri Abdul Khaleque
5. Shri Akshaibar Lal
6. Smt. Supriya Sadanand Sule

RAJYA SABHA

7. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
8. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
9. Smt. Geeta alias Chandraprabha
10. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
11. Smt. Mamata Mohanta
12. Shri Ramji
13. Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik

SECRETARIAT

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Smt. Anita Bhatt Panda | Additional Secretary |
| 2. Shri Ved Prakash Nauriyal | Joint Secretary |
| 3. Smt. Mamta Kemwal | Director |
| 4. Shri Krishendra Kumar | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration the following draft Reports of the Committee:-

(i) 45th Report on 'Demands for Grants (2023-24)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities);

(ii) xx xx xx xx

(iii) xx xx xx xx

4. The Chairperson then requested the Members to give their suggestions, if any, on the draft Reports. The Reports were adopted by the Committee without any modifications. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and present the same to both Houses of Parliament on 23.3.2023.

(The Committee then adjourned)

xx Does not pertain to this Report.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl.No	Para No.	Observations/ Recommendations
1.	1.16	<p>The Committee note that the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have an enormous social responsibility on their shoulders, and a national obligation as well, to mainstream disability, remove stigma and negative stereotyping and laying the foundation of a truly inclusive society through their schemes and initiatives, and contribute directly and indirectly to the nation's welfare. The Committee further note that as a signatory to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (CRPD), India has enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which seeks to empower persons with disabilities to live independently and with dignity. While the Government of India aims to create an inclusive society for persons with disabilities yet there are numerous hurdles faced in this regard such as lack of economic opportunities, lower educational achievements, poorer health, and higher rates of poverty. The Committee are however of the opinion that the biggest stumbling block would be the high prevalence of social stigma attached to disability. They are of the opinion that persons with impairments become 'disabled' only when the society denies them an enabling environment that gives them a chance to lead a dignified life. The Committee understand that there are many historical and other factors responsible for their predicament, nonetheless, they are convinced that with earmarking of adequate funds alongwith perspective planning, proactive leadership and prudent and judicious management of the allocations, a truly inclusive society can be evolved.</p>
2.	1.17	<p>The Committee note that since the work of Census 2021 was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department are dependent on data generated by Census 2011. According to Census 2011 data there are 2.68 persons with disabilities which accounts for more than 2.21 % of the total population. As the next Census (2021) is yet to be completed and results reported, the actual figures of persons suffering from the disabilities added after the Act of 2016 will be</p>

		<p>available in an year or two. In this connection, the Committee would like the Department to utilize all available data to arrive at the best estimation so that such persons are identified and brought into the ambit of the welfare schemes for Divyangjan. While the National Sample Survey (76th Round) has issued some sampled estimates of disabled persons, the focus is on counting only the people with bench mark disabilities and as per experts captures only a part of the population. The Committee therefore urge the Department to find an alternate way to include all the disabled persons, as much as possible in their welfare schemes till the Census figures come, particularly since most of these Divyangjan suffer from either mental or intellectual disability. The Committee also urge the Department to emphasize upon the disability surveyors conducting the NSS of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to consult disability experts while any survey is being designed, extensively train and sensitize surveyors on types of disabilities to include all the categories of disability that are covered in the Act of 2016 which is the ultimate aim of the legislation.</p>
3.	1.18	<p>The Committee have come to know that aids and appliances used by PwDs attract 5 percent charge under the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Committee believe that aids and appliances are critical for persons with disabilities to pursue independence, literacy and employment with dignity. While taking cognizance of the fact that the Department was taking up this issue with the GST Council at the highest level, the Committee wish to emphasise that being a social welfare department attending to the most marginalized section of the society, the Department, should endeavour to have these items declared tax free. They therefore desire the Department to pursue this matter for reaching a favourable conclusion that would make aids and appliances more affordable to the persons with disabilities in India.</p>
4.	2.8	<p>The Committee note that the BE amount proposed by the Department for the year 2023 -24 was ₹1,239.65 crore, which was reduced to ₹1,225.15 crore as BE by the Ministry of Finance. Reportedly, the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) had in 2021, locked both the</p>

		<p>allocations and physical targets towards the Central Sector Schemes namely ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS and Scholarship for 5 years <i>i.e.</i> till 2025-26. The Committee therefore urge the Department to review the underutilization of funds and take appropriate remedial measures with focused attention on regular monitoring and strict evaluation to ensure optimal utilization of the remaining amount in the coming 3 years till 2025-26 as per the EFC decision, locking targets of four schemes of the Department.</p>
5.	3.15	<p>The Committee find that non receipt of Utilization Certificates and non-receipt of adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Categories, deficient documents from NGOs/IAs affected the overall financial performance of the Department. In this context, the Committee find that non-receipt/late receipt of 'Utilization Certificates' and viable adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Categories from various States/ implementing partners has become a perennial problem causing under-utilization of funds consistently over the years. Taking into cognizance the various measures taken by the Department which include inter-alia monitoring of flow of funds through PFMS, physical visits, video conferencing with Implementing Agencies/State Governments, Review Meetings by Secretary, DEPwD, monitoring of expenditure under various schemes through periodic senior level officers meetings etc. for maximum utilization of allocated funds, the Committee feel that these efforts should result in better financial performance and receipt of good proposals from States well in time, hence desire that focused attention needs to be paid towards removing all impediments and concrete measures taken accordingly. The Committee note that the introduction of the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) model with effect from 1.4.2022 has brought in a revised process of fund flow under Central Sector Schemes on the PFMS Portal, which was finalised in August, 2022. Recognising that changes in existing processes and procedures take time to regularise, the Committee urge the Department to expedite all necessary procedural formalities for implementation of the CNA model in their Central Sector Schemes.</p>

6.	4.24	<p>The Committee find that Assistance of Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP) is one of the most important schemes for empowerment of PwDs by providing assistive devices and corrective surgeries. They note that an amount of ₹235.00 crore has been allocated as BE 2022-23 under ADIP, which was revised to ₹230.00 crore at RE stage and actual expenditure so far is ₹146.01 crore. An amount of ₹245.00 crore has been allocated as BE 2023-24. The outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic and restrictions due to social distancing norms which disrupted the entire manufacturing and distribution mechanism of the Scheme have been cited as the reasons for shortfalls in expenditure. While taking note of the genuine predicament of the Department as large gathering for distribution of aids and appliances as well as for holding of camps were suspended, the Committee impress upon the Department to now resort to a focused approach by taking up special drives regularly for holding of camps, programmes etc during the year 2023-24 to ensure full utilization of the BE allocation of ₹245 crore as earmarked for the fiscal. The Department has also informed the Committee about their future plan on holding camps this year. In this regard, the Committee would like to recommend that in addition to the holding of camps etc, the Department should also place emphasis on extensive publicity of the scheme so that greater number of PwDs are acquainted with the services offered under this scheme and maximum number of PwDs can avail the benefits of the same. The Committee suggest that the Department can earmark certain days like national holidays/festivals/International day of PwDs etc., as is done for the Pulse Polio Immunization campaign, for holding of simultaneous camps all across the country annually so that a public perception around this idea is created and greater turnout at such camps is ensured.</p>
7.	4.25	<p>The Committee, appreciate the initiative of the Department for launching the 'Arjun ADIP-MIS' Portal for ADIP Scheme from 15th September, 2022. Developed through C-DAC, this portal would not only undertake Real Time Monitoring of beneficiary data but also prevent and check duplication of beneficiaries. Besides, it also includes online registration of beneficiaries for</p>

		<p>new devices/repair and file grievances and facilitates the implementing agencies in data management and compliance. The Committee are confident that this initiative will bring about a welcome change in maintaining and generating disability statistics for arriving at accurate numbers for equitable allocation as well as setting targets.</p>
8.	5.26	<p>The Committee note that the constraints with respect to performance of the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) <i>inter-alia</i> include the adverse effect of Covid-19, non-submission of viable proposals by the Implementing Agencies, pendency of utilisation certificates, proposals not duly recommended etc. The Department are making all the efforts for achieving the targets for the year 2023-24. The Committee emphasise that SIPDA is the most comprehensive scheme for PwDs in India today and therefore call upon the Department to fortify their monitoring and coordination mechanism. As a CPMU has been set up and a Sugamya Bharat App has been launched, the Committee hope that targets set for various schemes under SIPDA would be achieved optimally. The Committee trust that the Department would continue to take appropriate steps to boost their performance during FY 2023-24 with regard to utilisation of allocated budget by taking recourse to robust measures which would entitle them to obtain requisite Revised Estimates/funds through supplementary grants for effectively carrying out the planned activities.</p>
9.	5.27	<p>The Committee find that the Accessible India Campaign under the umbrella scheme of the SIPDA is the flagship scheme of the Department. It seeks to achieve universal accessibility for persons with disabilities in Built Environment (Buildings), Transport System and Information & Communication Technology ecosystem across the country. The importance accorded to this scheme can be gauged from the fact that the Campaign is being monitored by Prime Minister Office through PRAGATI, Central Advisory Board headed by the Minister, SJE and Cabinet Secretariat through a Committee of Secretaries. Under the Central Government all 1100 identified buildings have been completed which shows lack of enthusiasm of States</p>

		<p>towards this Campaign. Under the targets for accessible transportation, the Committee find that that while all 35 International Airports have been made accessible, 55 out of 69 Domestic Airports have been made accessible In respect of Railways,709 Type A1, A & B Railway Stations had been made fully accessible. In terms of the road transport sector the Committee found that 5.96% buses are fully accessible and 29.05% of buses are currently partially accessible. The Committee wish to stress that the AIC presents a gateway to better mobility and reach to ensure equality in opportunities and the promise of a better life for PwDs. The Committee are also of the opinion that accessibility does not, merely mean access to the point of entrance of a building, public transport system etc. Rather it implies that a person with disability has access, equal to all others, to all sections and not restricted by his or her disabilities. The Committee feel that the challenges before PwDs are immense and therefore prudent strategies need to be chalked out to remove the impediments to fully achieve the intended objectives of the scheme within the intended timelines. The Committee desire to be informed about the progress made in this direction.</p>
10.	5.28	<p>The Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Government in issuing 89.29 lakh Unique Disability Identity (UDID) Cards so far in the country. The Committee note that the Unique Identification Card is a single document of identification and verification of the disabled for availing various benefits in the future. The entire process of application is only available in online mode and that the persons in remote and rural areas of low connectivity may be denied the benefits of the scheme, the Committee were happy to find that efforts are being made by the Department to personally reach these people at their location through their network to get them enrolled under the scheme and that even the persons have less than 40% disability are also being considered for issuing the cards. Another laudable initiative has been the despatch of physical UDID cards by SpeedPost which ensures better accountability. The Committee also appreciate that UDID card is available under the DigiLocker App saving PwDs the trouble of carrying the physical card. The Committee feel that all</p>

		<p>these steps are in the right direction and encourage the Department to explore other innovative methods of increasing the coverage under UDID. The Committee also suggest that appropriate publicity be given to this scheme to increase the coverage especially in rural areas where a large majority of the disabled reside.</p>
11.	5.29	<p>The Committee drew the attention to the difficulties faced by those Divyangjan who are unable to get their Aadhaar card made due to the fact that owing to particular type of disability, they are unable to mark their finger prints for registration purpose. When enquired about any remedy for such cases, it was informed that there is a provision of 'Bio-metric exception' for such Divyangjan desirous of obtaining Aadhaar Cards for themselves. Hence, the Committee desire that during the meetings of the Central Advisory Board with representatives of the States, the issue may be flagged and the implementation authorities are urged to use the Bio-metric exception for facilitating such Divyangjan in obtaining their Aadhaar cards.</p>
12.	6.7	<p>The Committee note that National Action Plan (NAP) for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) was launched in March, 2015 to provide skill training to PwDs for enabling them to become self reliant and productive and to integrate them with the mainstream of the society. The skilling of PwDs assumes considerable significance in helping them seek gainful employment resulting in their financial empowerment. The Committee are of the considered opinion that the purpose of imparting training and certifying the candidates and to enhance employment skills for the section of society perceived as most unemployable, should not suffer for want of necessary procedural formalities of validation of training centres and setting up of a CNA for the Scheme for PFMS monitoring. Hence, the Department are urged to focus on faster decisions at all levels so as to leverage the placement/self-employment of the trained/certified candidates to a sizeable extent as well as to maximize utilisation of the earmarked funds apart from appointing a CNA for monitoring purposes. In view of the fact that Skill training under NAP is a critical component and focal point for effective implementation of SIPDA, the Committee urge the Department to follow</p>

		<p>up the measures initiated so as to ensure maximum involvement of the district machinery as well as efficient centralized monitoring. The Committee further find that the Department is taking initiatives like collaborating with e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart and tying up with NGOs and other organizations to not only impart training but also for placement of the trained candidates. The Department was also mooting approaching industry organizations like CII, FII, ASSOCHAM etc to extend mentorship for such training programmes. While this is very welcome step, the Committee would like to be kept informed of any actions taken in this regard.</p>
13.	6.8	<p>The Committee desire the Department to organize effective awareness campaigns in tandem with the State/UT Governments and other stakeholders, to educate the target group about the long term benefits of the scheme so as to persuade and mobilize them to get themselves enrolled under the immensely gainful scheme. The Committee would also like the Department to create a mechanism to track candidates placed across all the schemes, for at least one year, post completion of training/certification/orientation to gauge their placement/self employment proportion and the effectiveness of the training imparted. Based on the findings and feedback from beneficiaries, the Department can take remedial measures as required.</p>
14.	7.9	<p>The Committee find that under DDRS, funds are released to NGOs for projects of Special Schools, rehabilitation centres, preparatory schools, cross disability pre-schools, early interventions centres, etc. relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities aimed at enabling them to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or socio-functional levels. The Committee have been assured by the Department of full utilization in the current financial. They therefore urge the Department to intensify their efforts in removing the recurring impediments which have been hampering the implementation of the DDRS and ensure maximum achievement of financial and physical targets.</p>

15.	8.9	<p>The Committee appreciate the performance under the scheme for scholarship for Students with disabilities. It is one of the few schemes where performance of the Department has been exceptional. During 2020-21, while the percentage of expenditure was almost 98 percent, the following year <i>i.e</i> 2021-22, there was overachievement where they managed to spend ₹120.32 cr against RE of ₹110.00 cr. For the current financial year, the Committee have been assured of a similar performance. In respect of physical targets, while the Covid 19 impacted and lockdown period of 2020-21 saw a shortfall in the number of beneficiaries, the following year the Department appears to have recouped the losses and the achievement almost matched the targets. In view of the assurances given by the Department that expenditure for the current financial will not only match RE, but also exceed the amount, the Committee are of the opinion that allocations for scholarship should be strengthened and the Department should approach the Ministry of Finance for further augmentation of the outlay. The Committee are of the strong opinion that providing monetary support acts as a safety net for students with Disabilities which also arrests the dropout rate and gives them an impetus to remain within the educational system. The Committee desire that the momentum created so far be persisted with and periodic assessment of the scheme be carried out so that any corrective actions if required can be initiated at the earliest. As the guidelines for Free Coaching Scholarship Schemes for students with disabilities are under review, they urge the Department to expedite the finalization of the guidelines so that the scheme can be rolled out at the earliest and beneficiaries can increase their employability through coaching/training/guidance. The Committee would like to be kept informed of all decisions taken in this regard.</p>
16.	9.8	<p>The Committee are happy to note that in keeping with the aim for inclusion of PwDs in all walks of life, the Cabinet had granted approval for 2 Centres For Disability Sports at Gwalior and Shillong respectively. The Committee find that the centre at Gwalior is slated for completion by June 2023 and the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the centre at Shillong is statedly</p>

		<p>under preparation. The Committee would like to highlight that the North Eastern region of India has a rich tradition of sports and the development of a sports centre in the region will go a long way in encouraging the participation of Sportspersons in national and international sports. The Committee therefore recommend that the DPR for the Shillong Centre and other preparations be completed fast so that the exercise of securing the necessary permissions, allocations etc may begin in right earnest.</p>
17.	10.6	<p>The Committee note that NHFDC administers two loan schemes viz Divyangjan Swavlamban Yojana for loans upto ₹50.00 lakh and Vishesh Microfinance Yojana for loans upto ₹60,000. The Committee further note that since 2020-21, the organization is no longer receiving funds from the Government. The Committee find that the coverage of loans of the NHFDC is spread across several States. The Committee have been apprised about the steps initiated by the NHFDC as part of their efforts to improve their performance. Taking into account the crucial need to augment creation of gainful employment opportunities for the intended beneficiaries, the Committee desire that the measures so initiated be pursued vigorously so as to achieve the desired end results. The Committee also recommend that the Department should strengthen the monitoring mechanism to assess the requirement and sustainability of loans forwarded so as to ensure increased fund disbursement and utilisation to effectively meet the requirements of the intended beneficiaries. The Committee further recommend that the performance of the Implementing agencies be constantly monitored with an aim to encourage due diligence and proper utilisation of the loan amount disbursed.</p>