

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1129
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2001
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS
GOWDAR MALLIKARJUNAPPA;Y.S. VIVEKANANDA REDDY

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

- (a) whether the mental illness has been listed as seventh disability under the Disability Act, 1975;
- (b) if so, whether the Act suggests many ways to gainfully employ the mentally handicapped persons;
- (c) whether no proper efforts are being made for their welfare;
- (d) if so, whether the Central Coordination Committee supposed to review and coordinate all activities in their favour has not met since November, 1998;
- (e) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the steps being considered by the Government to benefit the mentally handicapped persons?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT(DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA)

(a) Mental illness is recognized as one of the disabilities under Section 2 (i) of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

(b) to (f): The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which came into force from 7.2.1996, is a comprehensive piece of legislation which, inter alia, provides for both preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, job reservation, research and manpower development, development of barrier-free environment, rehabilitation of persons with disability, including mentally handicapped, unemployment allowance for the disabled, special insurance scheme for disabled employees and establishment of homes for persons with severe disability etc. The Act stipulates, inter-alia, that the appropriate Governments and local authorities shall, by notification, formulate schemes for ensuring employment of persons with disabilities, and such schemes may provide for training and welfare of persons with disabilities, etc. The Act also provides that appropriate governments and the local authorities shall, within the limits of their economic capacity and development, provide incentives to employers both in public and private sectors to ensure that at least five per cent of their work force is composed of persons with disabilities.

The National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH), Secunderabad an autonomous organization under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, is engaged in human resource development through conducting degree/diploma courses, training programmes including parent training programmes etc. The Institute provides special services of early intervention, special education, behaviour modification, guidance and counseling, speech pathology and audiology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, vocational training and job placement, genetic counseling and management of multiple handicaps by multidisciplinary team of professionals. Besides, NIMH also conducts outreach programmes by organizing camps in rural areas.

The National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFD) set up in 1997 by the Government provides financial assistance at concessional rate of interest to eligible disabled persons, including mentally handicapped so as to enable them to take up self-employment ventures. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities has been set up by an Act of 1999 for welfare of the target groups. The National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities has been approved in the State sector for implementation in order to create infrastructure at State/District/Block and Gram Panchayat level for providing comprehensive rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. A Central Scheme is also under implementation for setting up Composite Regional Centres for providing composite rehabilitation services. Over hundred districts have been identified for setting up District Centers for persons with disabilities with the objective of providing comprehensive rehabilitation services for disabled persons, including mentally handicapped.

After November 1998, the Central Coordination Committee has met twice i.e. on 24.10.2000 and 27.6.2001.