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THIRTY-EIGHTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT
(2008-2009)

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND EMPOWERMENT

Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Voluntary Organizations engaged in Implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons" of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Presented to Lok Sabha on 21.10.2008

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 21.10.2008



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
18 September, 2008 /27 Bhadrapada, 1930 (Saka)

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(2008-2009)**

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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THIRTY-EIGHTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
18 September, 2008/27 Bhadrapada, 1930 (Saka)**

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND EMPOWERMENT (2008-2009)**

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Mahaveer Bhagora
3. Shri Eknath M. Gaikwad
4. Shri Loganathan Ganesan
5. Shri Haribhau Jawale
6. Shri Bhai Lal
7. Shri Tek Lal Mahato
8. Dr. Babu Rao Mediyam
9. Shri Kailash Meghwal
10. Shri Vasantryao J. More
11. Shri Rupchand Murmu
12. Shri Jual Oram
13. Shri Ram Chandra Paswan
14. Shri Rabindar Kumar Rana
15. Dr. R. Senthil
16. Smt. Pratibha Singh
17. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya
18. Smt. Krishna Tirath
19. Smt. Usha Verma
20. Vacant
21. Vacant

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

22. Shri Silvius Condpan
23. Shri Mahmood A. Madani
24. Shri Ahmad Sayeed Malihabadi
25. Dr. Narayan Singh Manaklao
26. Dr. Radhakant Nayak
27. Shri Abdul Wahab Peevee
28. Shri Dharam Pal Sabharwal
29. Shri Veer Singh
30. Ms. Anusuiya Uikey
31. Shri Nand Kishore Yadav

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. (Smt.) P.K. Sandhu - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sarin - Joint Secretary
3. Shri Bhupesh Kumar - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Vanlalruata - Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Thirty-eighth Report on the Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Voluntary Organizations engaged in Implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons" of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

2. The Thirty-second Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid in Rajya Sabha on March 4, 2008. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 20th June, 2008. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 18th September, 2008.

3. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) is given in **Appendix**.

4. For facility of reference recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

5. The Committee place on record their appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

New Delhi:
18 September, 2008
27 Bhadrapada, 1930 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

REPORT

CHAPTER I

1.1 This Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject “Voluntary Organizations Engaged in Implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons” of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

1.2 The Thirty-second Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 4th March, 2008 and also laid in Rajya Sabha on 4th March, 2008. It contained 12 observations/recommendations. Replies of the Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been received and categorized as under:

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:
Paragraph Nos. 2.36, 2.37, 2.39, 2.42, 2.44 and 2.45
(Total 6 – Chapter II)
- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government:
Paragraph Nos. 2.38
(Total 1 – Chapter III)
- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and have been commented upon by the Committee in Chapter I:

Paragraph Nos. 2.41, 2.46 and 2.47

(Total 3 – Chapter IV)

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature:

Paragraph Nos. 2.40 and 2.43

(Total 2- Chapter V)

1.3 The Committee desire that action taken notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in respect of the Recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than three months of the presentation of the Report.

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken replies of the Government which need reiteration or merit comments.

A. Dual Processing of New Case Proposals in the Ministry

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 2.41)

1.5 The Committee had noticed that the Ministry had constituted a Screening Committee for screening new case proposals received for sanctioning old age homes in the Ministry, duly recommended by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Screening Committee on its part ascertain the eligibility of the proposal as per guidelines and gives preference to those areas where there is no such set up working and then recommend the proposal for sanction. On the recommendation of the Screening Committee, the cases are further processed by the Ministry. The Committee had been informed that once the Ministry takes up assessing the cases recommended by the Screening

Committee it has to go into the specifics of each case in detail and ask for upto date information as well. This double processing leads to inordinate delay in receiving a proposal and its actual sanction. Also there is no time limit fixed for sanctioning a proposal received by the Ministry. The Committee expressed their concern over this procedural delay in sanctioning of proposals as it outlives their relevance. Consequently, the Committee desired the Government to simplify and streamline their procedure for expeditious clearance of the proposals.

1.6 In their reply, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment stated that the procedure for processing of proposals will be reviewed in the light of the observations of the Committee, and efforts will be made to simplify/streamline it to the extent possible.

1.7 The Committee had expressed their concern at the inordinate procedural delay in sanctioning the proposals for old age homes due to double processing at two different levels - first by the Screening Committee and thereafter by the Ministry. No time limit seemed to have been fixed for sanctioning the proposals. Consequently, the Committee had desired this cumbersome procedure to be simplified and streamlined. The reply of the Ministry however, is not satisfactory as it has simply been stated that the processing will be reviewed and efforts will be made to simplify/streamline it to the extent possible, without elaborating the details and the time frame set therefor. The Committee deprecate this casual approach on the part of the Ministry to deal with a matter which involves the interests of the most vulnerable section of our society i.e. the old age people. The Committee would, therefore, like to reiterate and urge upon the Government to

streamline the procedure of sanctioning of proposals for their expeditious clearance and intimate the details in this regard. The Committee further desire the Ministry to fix a time limit for accepting or rejecting a proposal for old age homes, preferably three months and intimate the same to the concerned NGOs by post and E-Mail and also display it on their website.

B. Lack of Effective and Comprehensive Monitoring Mechanism at the Centre

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11, Para No. 2.46)

1.8 The Committee had also observed that there was no effective and comprehensive monitoring system in the Ministry to ensure efficient monitoring and implementation of the scheme. The Committee urged the Government to set up special monitoring cell at Centre as well as in State capitals to ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of this scheme.

1.9 In their reply, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment stated that the procedure of notional allocation of funds involves intensive scrutiny of all ongoing/new projects by the State level grant in aid Committee, before these are recommended to the Ministry. All the proposals are required to be accompanied by reports of inspections undertaken by the officials of the State Government. Further, the grant in aid is released to an NGO only after utilization certificate in respect of previous grants sanctioned to the organization has been received. Besides, the working of the NGOs is regularly monitored and evaluated by the State Government. The evaluation studies are also conducted from time to time to ensure that the objective of the scheme are being achieved.

Further, a system of Quarterly Progress Reports in order to monitor financial and physical progress is being introduced to ensure effective implementation.

1.10 The Committee were concerned to note that there was no regular, effective and comprehensive monitoring system in the Ministry to ensure efficient implementation and monitoring of the scheme 'Integrated Programme for Older Persons' which is implemented through NGOs. The Committee had therefore urged the Government to set up special monitoring cell at the Centre as well as in State capitals. The Committee are not inclined to accept the reply of the Ministry which has merely drawn attention of the Committee towards scrutiny of projects by the State level grant in aid Committee, inspection reports of State Governments, furnishing of Utilization Certificates for previous grants, evaluation studies conducted from time to time and Quarterly Progress Reports and have not given a specific reply with regard to their recommendation of setting up a monitoring cell in the Ministry. The Committee express their displeasure over this evasive reply furnished by the Ministry and feel that absence of an effective monitoring mechanism at the Centre is hampering the progress of this scheme. Considering the welfare of vulnerable older persons which is at stake, the Committee urge the Government to set up a special Monitoring Cell at the Centre, which would help in ensuring efficient monitoring and implementation of the scheme.

C. Evaluation Studies

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12, Para No. 2.47)

1.11 The Committee found that though the Ministry have been implementing the scheme of “Assistance to Voluntary Organisations engaged in implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons” since November, 1992 with an aim to empower and improve the quality of life of older persons, yet, the Ministry have not got conducted any evaluation study so far. The Committee were constrained to point out that the performance of this scheme is very unsatisfactory, both in terms of utilization of funds as well as the coverage of Non Governmental Organizations throughout the country. The Committee, therefore, recommended that the Government ought to engage the services of a competent external agency to review and carry out a thorough evaluation of this scheme and suitable remedial action should be taken on the deficiencies / shortcomings pointed out by such a study.

1.12 In their reply, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment stated that certain evaluation studies have been undertaken for the scheme whose details are as follows :-

S.No.	Evaluation Agency	Year in which evaluation done	States/Area for which done
1.	Foundation for Research and Social Development, New Delhi	2002-03	Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, U.P. and Punjab
2.	Arya Foundation for Research and Action, New Delhi	2005-06	Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland

Findings of the above evaluation studies have been considered in, while revising the scheme w.e.f. 1.4.2008.

1.13 The Committee had observed that since November, 1992 when the scheme 'Assistance to Voluntary Organizations engaged in implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons' was started, the Ministry had not got conducted any evaluation study of the scheme in spite of its unsatisfactory performance in financial as well as physical terms. In view of the same the Committee had recommended for thorough evaluation of the scheme and for remedial action on deficiencies/shortcomings pointed out by the study. In response, the Ministry have stated that evaluation studies have been conducted only in ten States and findings of the studies have been considered while revising the scheme w.e.f. 1.4.2008. However, the Ministry have not apprised the Committee the reasons for confining the evaluation studies to ten States only. The Committee regret to point out that the Ministry have not bothered to share with the Committee about the findings/shortcomings noticed during the evaluation study and about the major changes which have been incorporated in the revised scheme. The Committee, need hardly emphasize that India being a vast country with diverse cultures and geographical realms, the problems confronting the elderly vary from State to State. Hence evaluation studies should be conducted in the remaining States/Areas also. The Committee would like to be apprised about the major findings/shortcomings observed

in the evaluation studies in all the States and the major changes incorporated in the revised scheme as a consequence thereof.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1, Para No. 2.36)

2.1 The Committee take note of the fact that the growth rate in the ageing population has become a global phenomenon and India is also witnessing rapid increase in the population of aged people and we now rank second in the world in terms of number of the older persons (60 years and above), which as per 2001 census stands at 7.66 crore. According to the Ministry of social Justice and Empowerment the life expectancy is exhibiting a continuous increase due to improvement in health care facilities. The life expectancy which was around 29 years in 1947 has increased to 65 years at present. The projections in this connection indicate that the number of 60 plus persons in India is expected to increase to 10 crore in 2013 and further to 19.8 crore in 2030. Considering these factors, the Committee feel that the government ought to formulate a perspective action plan for improving the quality of life of older persons and also take necessary measures to ensure effective implementation of the schemes already in existence for the welfare of older persons so that the hardships being faced by them in the twilight years of their life, due to various reasons, could be obviated and they could live a life with dignity and comfort.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The Government has formulated the National Policy on Older Persons, which was announced in the year 1999 covering all aspects including long-term

issues concerning older persons. The salient features of the National Policy, which defines Senior Citizens as persons aged 60 and above, are as under :

- (i) To support financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter, information needs, appropriate concessions and discounts etc. to senior citizens.
- (ii) Special attention to protect and strengthen their legal rights such as to safeguard their life and property.

The major areas of intervention include financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter/housing, protection of life and property and welfare of the elderly. This policy has suggested concrete actionable for the welfare of this segment of population.

The Second World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid, Spain, from 8th to 12th April, 2002, adopted the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. It has guided the course of thinking and action on ageing all over the world including India, which is a signatory to this Action Plan. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had written to all the State Governments/UTs and other Central Ministries on 18-5-2007 to take necessary steps for fulfilling the objectives of this Plan.

The Government has set up a National Council for Older persons (NCOP) on 10.5.1999, headed by the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. Its primary function is to advise and aid the Government on policies and programmes for older persons and also to provided the feedback to the

Government on implementation of the National Policy. Its members are experienced and well-known individuals representing NGOs, citizen's groups, retired person's associations and from the field of law, social welfare and security, research, and medicine. The Ministry has also set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) headed by Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, for taking action on the recommendations of NCOP. The IMC comprises representatives of twenty-two Ministries/Departments. Its last meeting was held on 7.2.2008.

The Government has notified that Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, on 31.12.2007 for providing need based maintenance and better healthcare facilities to the senior citizens, setting up old age homes in every district of the country and for institutionalization of the mechanism for protection of life and property of the senior citizens. The Ministry has requested all the State Governments to notify the Act in their respective states at the earliest. Karnataka has already notified the Act on 1.4.2008 and Nagaland has notified the Act on 22.4.2008.

Further, the existing Plan scheme "Integrated Programme for Older Persons" has been revised with effect from 1-4-2008. The financial assistance being provided to the non-governmental organizations for maintenance of old age homes, day care centers and mobile medicare units has been enhanced considerably. Many new projects have also been introduced in the revised scheme to ensure wider spectrum of services to the elderly people. A copy of the revised scheme is enclosed at Annexure-I.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2, Para No. 2.37)

2.3 The Committee have been given to understand that the basic objectives of the scheme of 'Assistance to Voluntary Organisations engaged in implementing Integrated Programmes for Welfare of Older Persons' are to reinforce and strengthen the ability and commitment of the family to provide care to older persons, foster amiable multi-generational relationships, generate awareness on issues pertaining to older persons etc. and step up measures to address issues concerning older persons with an aim to empower and improve the quality of life of older persons. The Committee however, regret to observe that this scheme has not been given due importance which is evident from the fact that out of Rs. 88.16 crores allocated for the scheme from the year 2001-02 to 2005-06 only Rs. 12.16 crores were utilized and the unutilized funds were diverted to other schemes. The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Ministry that non-utilisation of funds is due to non-receipt of recommendations/inspection report from the major States like AP, Orissa, UP, Maharashtra etc. and also due to the fact that the large number of new proposals duly recommended by the State Governments were rejected by the Screening Committee. Obviously the Ministry have failed to effectively implement the Scheme, resulting in increase in the difficulties being faced by the older persons particularly infirm, destitute and widows who remain neglected and uncared. The Committee therefore, express their unhappiness at this sorry state of affairs as it reflects a very casual approach and lack of dedication on the part of the Government in addressing the

issues relating to the welfare of this vulnerable section of our society. The Committee hope that the Government would maintain close coordination and cooperation with State Governments to ensure timely receipt of proposals from them and allocate quickly the requisite funds therefor. Further, the amount allocated for the scheme should not be diverted to other schemes of the Ministry.

Reply of the Government

2.4 The Ministry tries to utilize the maximum amount out of the allocation made under the scheme every year. As can be seen from the information furnished to the Standing Committee on 26.9.2006 (extract placed at annexure-II), the utilization of funds during the years 2001-02 to 2005-06 is not Rs. 12.16 crore as observed by the Committee but out of Rs. 88.16 crore allocated for the scheme during this period. An amount of Rs. 75.55 crore was utilized for the scheme and only Rs. 12.61 crore were diverted to other schemes.

Since it is a demand driven scheme, the disbursement of grant in aid depends upon the timely receipt of complete proposals from the State Governments. In order to ensure optimum utilization of allocated funds, a system of state-wise Notional allocation of funds as well as consideration and recommendation of proposals by State level Grant-in-aid Committee has been introduced. With these efforts, the position of utilization of funds has improved and during the year 2007-08, a amount of Rs. 16.12 crore was utilized as against Rs. 12.53 crore utilized during 2006-07, thereby registering an increase of about 28% from the previous year.

However, the suggestion given by the Standing Committee has been noted for compliance. Efforts will be made to maintain close coordination with the State Governments to ensure that the proposals are received from them and sanctioned in a timely manner. Efforts would also be made to utilize the entire amount allocated under the scheme so that that question of diversion of funds does not arise.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4, Para No. 2.39)

2.5 According to the Ministry, the scheme is a demand driven scheme and depends upon the existence of NGOs in a particular State or District and in principle the preference is given to the areas where no NGO is working or are not in adequate numbers. The Committee feel that this results in regional imbalance in disbursement of funds as NGOs are unwilling to work in far flung or remote areas or there are very less number of NGOs in some States. This adversely affects the proper implementation of the scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the NGOs working for the implementation of the scheme for older persons may be encouraged to serve in unserved areas. Also adequate amount of funds may be allocated to the implementing agencies of the scheme in proportion to the population of older persons in respective States. Special attention also needs to be paid towards the betterment of the infirm, destitute and widows who are in dire need of assistance.

Reply of the Government

2.6 The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has introduced a new procedure for release of grants-in-aid from the financial year 2007-08. As per this procedure, notional allocation of funds is made State-wise. The State-wise population of older persons is also taken into account while finalizing the allocation. The proposals for new projects received from less served states/areas are accorded due priority to ensure equitable distribution of projects.

Under the revised scheme "Integrated Programme for Older Persons", many new projects/activities have been included for financial assistance, which are specially aimed to infirm and handicapped among older persons. These include Respite Care Homes, Day Care Centres for Demential/alzheimer's disease, Physiotherapy Clinics, Disability/hearing aids camps and facilities for mental health care for older persons. It also intends to support multi-facility care centers for destitute older women, including widows.

Apart from above, assistance is provided to destitute (male and female) of 65 years and above under National Social assistance Programme fo Ministry of Rural Development. Swadhar scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development also provides for shelter, food, clothing etc. to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7, Para No. 2.42)

2.7 The Committee regret to observe that during 2004-05 and 2005-06 out of 169 and 285 proposals placed before the Screening Committee, it recommended only 99 and 73 proposals and the Government sanctioned only 23 and 21 proposals respectively. Thus, a large number of proposals, which were recommended by the State Governments were rejected by Government by resorting to further scrutiny at various levels subsequently resulting in discouragement to the NGOs. This clearly indicates that either the proposals sent with the approval of State Governments were not worthy of clearance by Central Government or the Ministry failed to procure any paper / document at the time of scrutiny of the proposals due to which the proposals were rejected subsequently. The Committee recommend that while scrutinizing the proposals the Screening Committee should be empowered to obtain the required documents from the State for the proposals sent by them, examine the proposals on merit and sanction them in a time bound manner.

Reply of the Government

2.8 Only the proposals for starting new projects are required to be placed before the Screening Committee. The new procedure introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from 2007-08 attempts to ensure that the proposals forwarded by the State Governments are complete in all respects. The Ministry circulates a list of documents required with the proposals to State Governments/Union Territory administrations every year to avoid unnecessary correspondence.

Even then, if any proposal is found to be deficient and the Screening Committee considers it suitable for recommendation, the missing papers/documents are obtained from the State Governments or the concerned organization without reference to any higher authority. The position is likely to improve considerably with the introduction of the new procedure involving State level grant-in-aid Committees.

Further, as mentioned in reply to para 2.4, the procedure will be reviewed for further improvement in the light of the Committee's observation.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9, Para No. 2.44)

2.9 Another disquieting feature of the scheme is the fact that the distribution of projects is not commensurate with the population distribution of elderly persons in States. Uttar Pradesh which has the highest population of elderly persons has got only 48 NGOs implementing this scheme, whereas a State like Andhra Pradesh having less population of older persons has the maximum number of NGOs i.e. 140. Maharashtra which has the second highest population of elderly persons in the country has only 20 NGOs. The Ministry have informed the Committee that since it is a demand driven scheme, the Ministry sanction projects depending upon the existence of NGOs in a particular State or in a particular district. However, the Ministry have decided to sanction up to a maximum of two new cases of old age homes in those districts where there is no project or only one project, to ensure equitable distribution of old age homes

throughout the country. The Committee find that there is uneven distribution of NGOs in the country. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Ministry should encourage NGOs to come forward to serve in the under-served or unserved areas and avail of funds for implementing this scheme there.

Reply of the Government

2.10 As already stated in reply to para 2.37, a system of state-wise notional allocation of funds has been introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the financial year 2007-08. Besides making allocation of funds based on population of older persons in a state, one of the objectives of the revised procedure is to ensure equitable distribution of projects throughout the country. The State Governments are asked to given inter-se priority to projects being recommended by them, considering the needs of different areas. In the Ministry also, the preference is given to underserved/unserved areas while considering new proposals.

Under the revised scheme, financial assistance to reputed NGOs to function as Regional Resource and Training Centres (RRTC) for building capacity of NGOs working for welfare of older persons will also be provided. With the help and guidance of RRTCs, NGOs in unserved areas will be able to get access to funds under the scheme.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10, Para No. 2.45)

2.11 The Committee have been informed that the Ministry have so far been involving groups of elderly persons in basically policy matters and not directly for implementing the scheme. While appreciating the involvement of elderly persons in policy matters, the Committee also desire that the Ministry should encourage the NGOs to be formed by elderly persons themselves, get themselves registered and avail the benefits of the scheme directly from the Government. The Committee feel that direct involvement of Older Persons in implementation of the schemes would be more fruitful in empowering and improving the quality of life of older persons.

Reply of the Government

2.12 The managing Committees of many non-governmental organizations, which are implementing this scheme, have older persons among their office-bearers. The Ministry encourages the setting up of societies by older persons with a view to run projects for the welfare of the elderly. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has made a provision in the revised scheme for formation of Vridha Sanghas/Senior Citizens Associations and Volunteers Bureaus.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 2.38)

3.1 In this connection the Committee find that the Ministry have taken certain steps namely - to request NGOs to send proposals complete in all respects, persuade State Governments/UT Administrations to send the inspection reports for release of grants by NGOs by September of every year and to request the State Governments/NGOs to send more proposals from unserved areas, so as to ensure timely utilization of funds allocated under the scheme. The Committee desire that the Government should impress upon the State Governments/UTs/NGOs to strictly adhere to the steps initiated by them for effective implementation of the scheme.

Reply of the Government

3.2 The Ministry writes to the State Governments, UT Administrations and the non-governmental organizations from time to time. Requesting them to follow the prescribed procedure. The issue is also discussed in the annual State Welfare Secretaries conference, convened by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. At the beginning of each financial year, the Ministry writes to the state Governments comprehensively guiding them to forward the proposals with requisite documents, after due screening by the State level grant in aid Committees. A copy of the D.O. letter dated 27.5.2008 sent to the State

Governments in this regard is enclosed at Annexure-III. The matter will be suitably followed up.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATION/ OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND HAVE BEEN COMMENTED UPON BY THE COMMITTEE IN CHAPTER-I

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 2.41)

4.1 The Committee find that the Ministry have constituted a Screening Committee for screening new case proposals received for sanctioning old age homes in the Ministry, duly recommended by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Screening Committee on its part ascertain the eligibility of the proposal as per guidelines and gives preference to those areas where there is no such set up working and then recommend the proposal for sanction. On the recommendation of the Screening Committee, the cases are further processed by the Ministry. The Committee has been informed that once the Ministry takes up assessing the cases recommended by the Screening Committee it has to go into the specifics of each case in detail and ask for upto date information as well. This double processing leads to inordinate delay in receiving a proposal and its actual sanction. Also there is no time limit fixed for sanctioning a proposal received by the Ministry. The Committee express their concern over this procedural delay in sanctioning of proposals as it outlives their relevance. Consequently, the Committee desire the Government to simplify and streamline their procedure for expeditious clearance of the proposals.

Reply of the Government

4.2 Procedure for processing of proposals will be reviewed in the light of the observations of the Committee, and efforts will be made to simplify/streamline it to the extent possible.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.7 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11, Para No. 2.46)

4.3 The Committee also observe that there is no effective and comprehensive monitoring system in the Ministry to ensure efficient monitoring and implementation of the scheme. The Committee urge the Government to set up special monitoring cell at Centre as well as in State capitals to ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of this scheme.

Reply of the Government

4.4 As may be evident from the reply to para 2.41, the procedure of notional allocation of funds involves intensive scrutiny of all ongoing/new projects by the State level grant in aid Committee, before these are recommended to the Ministry. All the proposals are required to be accompanied by reports of inspections undertaken by the officials of the State Government. Further, the grant in aid is released to an NGO only after utilization certificate in respect of

previous grants sanctioned to the organization has been received. Besides, the working of the NGOs is regularly monitored and evaluated by the State Government. The evaluation studies are also conducted from time to time to ensure that the objective of the scheme are being achieved.

Further, a system of Quarterly Progress Reports in order to monitor financial and physical progress is being introduced to ensure effective implementation.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.10 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12, Para No. 2.47)

4.5 The Committee find that though the Ministry have been implementing the scheme of “Assistance to Voluntary Organisations engaged in implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons” since November, 1992 with an aim to empower and improve the quality of life of older persons, yet, the Ministry have not got conducted any evaluation study so far. The Committee are constrained to point out that the performance of this scheme is very unsatisfactory, both in terms of utilization of funds as well as the coverage of Non Governmental Organizations throughout the country. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government ought to engage the services of a competent external agency to review and carry out a thorough evaluation of this scheme and suitable remedial action should be taken on the deficiencies / shortcomings pointed out by such a study.

Reply of the Government

4.6 Certain evaluation studies have been undertaken for the scheme whose details are as follows :-

S.No.	Evaluation Agency	Year in which evaluation done	States/Area for which done
1.	Foundation for Research and Social Development, New Delhi	2002-03	Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, U.P. and Punjab
2.	Arya Foundation for Research and Action, New Delhi	2005-06	Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and Nagaland

Findings of the above evaluation studies have been considered in, while revising the scheme w.e.f. 1.4.2008.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.13 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NAUTRE

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 2.40)

5.1 The Committee are constrained to point out that no study has been conducted by the Government about the schemes relevant to older persons being implemented in other countries. The Committee desire that the Government should study how the schemes which are specifically relevant to older persons are drawn up and implemented in other parts of the world so that the better aspects of the same could be considered for implementation in our country to the extent possible.

Reply of the Government

5.2 The suggestion of the Standing Committee has been noted and efforts will be made to get such studies conducted through the National Institute for Social Defence.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8, Para No. 2.43)

5.3 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that under the scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisations grants-in-aid is given to NGOs for maintenance of Old Age Home (a residential unit for 25 poor destitute elderly persons of 60 years and above who have little or no regular means of subsistence from their own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources), day care centres, Mobile Medicare units etc.

The Committee however, regret to point out that the Ministry do not have the data of destitute persons on the basis of which grant is given to NGOs for Old Age Homes. This clearly indicates lack of concern on the part of the Government for the welfare of the most vulnerable section among the elderly population. The Committee are of the opinion that this data could easily be collected from the States/NGOs running Old Age Homes across the country. The Committee recommend that the Government should take expeditious measures to collect this data. With this requisite data the Government would be able to address the problems confronting the destitute aged persons in a more realistic manner. The progress achieved in this regard may be communicated to the Committee.

Reply of the Government

5.4 The grant-in-aid is released to the non-governmental organizations on the specific recommendations of the State Governments/Union Territory administrations, which take into account the need and desirability for running the project at a specific location. Further, the suggestion of the Standing Committee regarding collection of data has been noted and efforts will be made to collect authentic data on destitute persons, especially the elderly.

(Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment O.M. No. 15-38(3)/08-09/AG dated 20.6.2008)

NEW DELHI:
18 September, 2008
27 Bhadrapada, 1930(Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Social
Justice and Empowerment.

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON THURSDAY,
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2008.**

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Eknath M. Gaikwad
3. Shri Haribau Jawale
4. Shri Bhai Lal
5. Shri Tek Lal Mahato
6. Dr. Babu Rao Mediyam
7. Shri Kailash Meghwal
8. Shri Ram Chandra Paswan
9. Shri Rabindar Kumar Rana
10. Dr. R. Senthil
11. Smt. Pratibha Singh
12. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya
13. Smt. Usha Verma

RAJYA SABHA

14. Shri Silvius Condpan
15. Shri Ahmad Sayeed Malihabadi
16. Dr. Narayan Singh Manaklao
17. Dr. Radhakant Nayak
18. Ms. Anusuiya Uikay

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ashok Sarin - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Bhupesh Kumar - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting has been convened to consider Memorandum No. 1 regarding selection of subjects and for consideration of Thirty-Eighth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Thirty-Second Report on the subject "Voluntary Organizations Engaged in Implementing Integrated Programme for Welfare of Older Persons".

3. *****

4. *****

5. The Committee then took up for consideration the Thirty-Eighth Report and adopted the same with some minor modifications.

6. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Report in the light of some minor suggestion and present the same to Parliament on their behalf.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY SECOND REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA).

		Total	Percentage
I	Total number of Recommendations	12	
II	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government; (Para Nos. 2.36, 2.37, 2.39, 2.42, 2.44 and 2.45)	6	50%
III	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government: (Para No. 2.38)	1	8.33%
IV	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and have been commented upon by the Committee in Chapter I: (Para Nos. 2.41, 2.46 and 2.47)	3	25%
V	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature: (Para Nos. 2.40 and 2.43)	2	16.67%