

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5595

ANSWERED ON:30.04.2013

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUTISTIC PERSONS

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

- (a) the symptoms and the causes of autism along with the measures taken by the Union Government to prevent the disease in the country;
- (b) the funds sanctioned and released by the Union Government to the States and the NGOs for the treatment of the disease and increase the educational and employment opportunities to the persons suffering from autism along with the utilisation of the funds during each of the last three years and the current year, State/NGO-wise; and
- (c) the achievements made so far, in this direction?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI P. BALRAM NAIK)

(a): Autism is a neurodevelopment disorder which is identified based on behavioral manifestations that include impairment in reciprocal social interactions, delay /deviance in speech/ language/communication development and restricted, repetitive stereotyped behaviors. Diagnosis can be usually established firmly by the age of 3 years.

The causes of autism may be classified as largely genetic in origin with a role of environmental factors. Many genes have been associated with the diagnosis in addition with birth injuries which can put children at risk for autism. Research into the causation of autism is in progress all over the world. The exact causation is yet to be determined.

The Government of India has adopted community based care of mentally ill persons under District Mental Health Programme (DMHP), a component of the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). Under DMHP, a mental health team led by a psychiatrist is placed in a district to provide services, training to general health care personnel for identification and treatment of common mental illnesses and conduct IEC activities for awareness.

The National Trust for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, a statutory body under the Department of Disability Affairs is implementing various other schemes for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities. A Statement indicating details of the schemes is at Annexure-I.

(b) and (c): A Statement indicating details of funds released under various schemes of NMHP to the States/Districts/Institutes during the last three years is at Annexure-II (a), (b) & (c). No funds have been released to NGOs.