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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
EMPOWERMENT**

**(2014 - 2015)**

**(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT**

**(DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND  
EMPOWERMENT)**

Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Implementation of Schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens'.

**SEVENTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

**NEW DELHI**

**March, 2015/Phalguna, 1936 (Saka)**

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**Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Implementation of Schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens'.**

**Presented to Lok Sabha on 13.3.2015**

**Laid in Rajya Sabha on 13.3.2015**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

**NEW DELHI**

**March, 2015/Phalguna, 1936 (Saka)**

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
(2014-2015)**

**SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRMAN**

**MEMBERS  
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Jasvantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor
3. Kunwar Bharatendra
4. Shri Dilip Singh Bhuria
5. Shri Santokh Singh Chaudhary
- #6. Shri Sher Singh Ghubaya
7. Shri Jhina Hikaka
8. Shri Prakash Babanna Hukkeri
9. Shri Bhagwant Khuba
10. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
11. Smt. Maragatham K.
12. Shri Kariya Munda
13. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
14. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
15. Sadhvi Savitri Bai Phule
16. Dr. Udit Raj
17. Smt. Satabdi Roy
18. Prof. Sadhu Singh
19. Smt. Neelam Sonkar
- #20. Smt. Mamta Thakur
- \*21. Shri Tejpratap Singh Yadav

**MEMBERS  
RAJYA SABHA**

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
- \*\*23. Dr. Tazeen Fatma
24. Shri Ahamed Hassan
25. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
26. Shri Prabhat Jha
27. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai
28. Shri Praveen Rashtrapal
29. Shri Nand Kumar Sai
30. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
31. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

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\* Nominated w.e.f. 22.12.2014

\*\* Nominated w.e.f. 29.1.2015

# Nominated w.e.f. 25.3.2015

## **LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

1. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director
4. Smt. Neena Juneja - Under Secretary

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2014-15) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Seventh Report on the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Implementation of Schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens'.

2. The Thirty-ninth Report was presented to Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 and then presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment) furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

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

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

NEW DELHI;

10 March, 2015

19 Phalgun, 1936 (Saka)

RAMESH BAIS

Chairman,

Standing Committee on

Social Justice and

Empowerment

## CHAPTER - I

### REPORT

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-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Implementation of Schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens'.

1.2 The Thirty-ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 07.02.2014. It contained 31 observations/recommendations. Replies of Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been examined and are categorized as under: -

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government :  
Paragraph Nos. 2, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

(Total : 16- Chapter II)

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government :  
Paragraph Nos. 9 and 12

(Total : 2 - Chapter-III)

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration:  
Paragraph Nos. 4, 6, 7 and 14

(Total : 4 - Chapter-IV)

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

Paragraph Nos. 1, 3, 5, 8, 17, 18, 23, 30 and 31

(Total : 9 - Chapter- V)

**1.3 The Committee desire that action taken notes on the 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 this Report.**

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the replies received from the Government which need reiteration or merit comments.

**A. Early implementation of schemes for welfare of senior citizens during 12<sup>th</sup> Plan**

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

1.5 The Committee were informed that the Ministry have set up an expert committee to formulate a few new schemes under the XII<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for the welfare of the senior citizens which include the scheme for awareness generation for Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior citizens Act 2007, setting up a helpline for senior citizens at the National and District Levels, setting up a National Commission for senior citizens, and setting up a National Trust for the Aged. The Committee were anguished to note that the above schemes incorporated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan have not taken off so far, though, almost two precious years of the Plan period had elapsed. The Committee recommended that the Ministry take urgent necessary action so that these schemes are operationalized at the earliest.

1.6 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"Proposal for setting up a helpline for senior citizens at the National and District Levels is under active consideration of the Expert Committee set up by the Ministry. Appropriate action on setting up of other new schemes has also been initiated in consultation with experts in the field of geriatrics. The Standing Committee will be apprised of the action taken accordingly."



**1.7 The Committee had desired the Ministry to take action for creating awareness about the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, setting up a helpline for senior citizens at National and District levels, as well as setting up a National Commission for Senior Citizens and National Trust for the Aged which are part of their programme for 12<sup>th</sup> Plan. The Committee are not at all satisfied with the pace at which the Ministry have initiated action in the matter as they find that so far no concrete results have been achieved in this regard. The Committee, therefore, impress upon the Ministry that immediate steps should be taken to implement these schemes without further delay.**

## **B. Harnessing of talent of senior citizens and their rehabilitation**

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 5)**

1.8 The Committee noted that as per the census of India's projected value of expectation of life at birth (2011-15), the life expectancy of males and females is 67.3 years and 69.6 years respectively. The Committee noted that the National Policy for Senior Citizens recognizes productive ageing as the key to the welfare of senior citizens between the age of 60-70 years. The Committee felt that with the increase in the life expectancy and relatively better state of health of people, the Government need to look at continuity of employment upto 65 years/or greater post retirement opportunities for the senior citizens so that the society continue to draw upon their experience and tap their talent. The Committee desired the Ministry to seriously consider the various options which would include reviewing the age of retirement, reemployment opportunities for the retired persons subject to their physical fitness and mental agility and setting up a Directorate of Employment and Rehabilitation for Senior Citizens.

1.9 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"The issues raised by the committee have been noted. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 enacted by Parliament in December, 2007 defines Senior Citizen as any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above. Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare has launched an initiative, named 'Sankalp' to channelize skill and expertise of retired Government servants into constructive activity for betterment of society. This initiative will contribute to a sense of fulfilment and hence to a happier, healthier and longer life for pensioners. The Scheme is being run as a pilot restricted to 500 pensioners.

As regards setting up a Directorate of Employment and Rehabilitation for Senior Citizens, the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Labour & Employment and Department of Personnel and Training for their comments/views. The reply from these Ministries is awaited. Action taken report will be submitted, on receipt of the requisite information from these Ministries".

**1.10 The Committee had desired that with the increase in life expectancy and relatively better state of health of people, the Government need to look at the continuity of employment upto 65 years, of greater post retirement opportunities for senior citizens so that the society continue to draw upon their experience and tap their talent. The Committee note that the Ministry have taken up a pilot project called ‘Sankalp’ to channelize the skill and expertise of retired Government servants and the matter regarding setting up of Directorate of Employment and Rehabilitation for senior citizens has been taken up with the Ministry of Labour and Employment and Department of Personnel and Training for their comments/views. The Committee desired that more efforts need to be made by the Ministries involved for tapping the talent of retired persons by providing more re-employment opportunities in both the public and private sector. The Committee would like to be informed of the progress in the matter.**

## **C. Early formulation and implementation of new National Policy on Older Persons**

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 6)**

1.11 The Committee noted that the National Policy on older persons was announced in January 1999. Though the Policy had several features like State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons to improve the quality of their lives, the implementation has been rather tardy and there is no coordination mechanism to effectively implement the policy. In view of the new demographic changes and to address the upfront areas viz. citizens of 80+, elderly women, rural poor and unorganized sectors, the Government, notably, set up a Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. (Smt.) V. MohiniGiri to draft a new National Policy on senior citizens, which submitted its report on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2011. The Committee were deeply distressed that even after two years of submission of the new draft National Policy on Senior Citizens, the policy was yet to be finalized and implemented. Taking serious note of the tardy implementation of the 1999 policy and the inordinate delay in finalization of the new National policy on senior citizens, the Committee deplored the apathy and neglect on the part of the Government to address the problems of senior citizens. Though, the Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment assured the Committee that efforts were being made to finalise the policy by the end of the financial year 2013-14, yet taking note of the unconscionable delay, the Committee recommended that the Ministry take urgent action so as to ensure that the new National Policy on Senior Citizens is finalized and implemented expeditiously without further loss of time and they be apprised.

1.12 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"Though the proposed new policy is based on the National Policy on Older Persons, 1999, it is an improvement which takes into account the present demographic pattern, socio-economic needs, social value system, advancement in science and technology and other relevant fields. Compared to the present policy, the new policy is more comprehensive and all encompassing. The approved National Policy for Senior Citizens could not be processed further on account of operation of the model code of conduct. With the election of the new Government and new Ministers in each Ministry, the process for obtaining approval of the competent authority to the proposed new National Policy has been initiated".

**1.13 The Committee note that the Ministry had assured to finalize the National Policy on Senior Citizens by the financial year 2013-14. However in their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry have stated that earlier the National Policy for Senior Citizens could not be processed further on account of operation of model code of conduct. Now, the process of obtaining approval of the competent authority to the proposed new policy has been initiated. The Committee may be informed of the latest position in the matter and the time frame drawn by the Ministry for finalizing the new National Policy.**

## **D. Periodic meetings of National Council for Senior Citizens and State level councils**

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 7, Para No. 7)**

1.14 The Committee had noted that the new National Council for Senior Citizens constituted on 22.2.2012, under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, has been largely dysfunctional as no meeting of the Council had been held, though required to meet twice in a year. As the National Council for Senior Citizens is an apex body on the policies and programmes for senior citizens, the Committee urged that the Council may be fully functionalized at the earliest alongwith constitution of State Level Councils for senior citizens in all the States and the Committee apprised.

1.15 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"Under Section 32 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, Rules are to be framed by the respective State Governments/Union Territories providing *inter-alia* for the constitution of State Council for Senior Citizens and District Committees. Chapter VII of the Model Rules vide Rule 21, the States may, by order, establish a State Council for Senior Citizens to advise the State Governments on effective implementation of the Act. As per available records, 5 States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and 3 Union Territories ie., Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh and NCT of Delhi, have so far constituted the State Council for Senior Citizens. The first meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens was scheduled to be held in the month of June 2014 in Hyderabad. However, due to pre-occupation of the Hon'ble Minister (SJ&E), the meeting has been postponed. The matter regarding constitution of State Councils for senior citizens in all the States will be discussed in the meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens, whenever it is held".

**1.16 The Committee had pointed out that the National Council for senior citizens constituted on 22.02.2012 under the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment had been largely dysfunctional as no meeting of the same was held. The Ministry have now informed as on date no meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens could be held and only 5 States and 3 Union Territories have constituted State Councils for Senior Citizens. The Committee are unhappy with such reply of the Ministry and desire expeditious action so as to make the National and State Councils for Senior Citizens functional and hold their meetings periodically.**

## **E. Organization of health camps of MMUs in remote, inaccessible areas**

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 14, Para No. 14)**

1.17 The Committee were dismayed to observed that the number of Mobile Medicare Units (MMUs) assisted under the scheme have gone down from 38 units in year 2011-12 to 29 units in 2012-13. The Committee were of the firm view that MMUs are an important part of the IPOP scheme and, therefore, stress that more MMUs should be assisted, especially in rural and inaccessible areas deprived of medical care as old people, who at times, confined to their homes and bedridden, are unable to travel. MMUs should also regularly organize health camps in remote and distant areas so that more people can avail the benefits.

1.18 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"The Integrated Programme for Older Persons, a Central Sector Scheme, releases more funds for Mobile Medicare Unit (MMUs) for older persons living in slums, rural and inaccessible areas where proper health facilities are not available. The project Mobile Medicare Units aims to enable older people to assume an active role in maintaining and improving their own health and in encouraging others to do the same. Each MMU covers at least 400 persons per month. Grants-in-aid under this MMU is given to agencies that have shown a credible track record working for the cause of elderly and organizations that have proven track record in providing free medical care to the people are eligible for funding. The State Governments are requested from time to time to forward new cases of MMU along with other cases admissible for assistance under the scheme from service deficient areas. Recognized charitable hospitals/Nursing homes/Medical Institutions/colleges are also eligible seeking grants-in-aid. The State Governments will also be advised to issue suitable directions to the MMU located in their areas to organize health camps in remote areas on regular basis".



**1.19 The Committee were of the firm view that Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) were an important part of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) Scheme and they should be assisted in rural and inaccessible areas deprived of medical care. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have merely stated that the State Governments are requested from time to time to forward new cases of MMUs along with other cases admissible for assistance under the scheme from service deficient areas. The Ministry have further stated that the State Governments will also be advised to issue suitable directions to the MMUs located in their areas to organize health camps in remote areas on regular basis. The Committee desire that they may be informed, in detail, of the latest status of MMUs operational in the various States and the steps being taken to increase their number in non-accessible areas.**

## **F. Uniform criteria for definition of senior citizens and due concession in airfare**

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 23, Para No. 23)**

1.20 The Committee were pleased to note that the Ministry of Railways provides facilities for senior citizens, such as separate ticket counters for senior citizens at various centres and concessional rail fares for senior citizens. The Committee were, however, surprised that the National Carrier, Air India, under the Ministry of Civil Aviation offers 50% discount on the Highest Economy class Basic fare to senior citizens who have completed 63 years of age on the date of commencement of journey for travel on Domestic Network. The Committee noted that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 defines senior citizens as people of 60 years of age. Therefore, the Committee recommended that all schemes for senior citizens should be aimed at the target group of 60+ and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment should issue mandatory instructions in this regard. Moreover, the concession in airfare should be on the minimum fare of that day and not on the full fare ticket as per the prevalent practice.

1.21 The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated:

"The Committee's recommendation to provide 50% concession on the total/actual airfare in Air India to all those who have attained the age of 60 years and to issue suitable instructions to private airlines to provide 50% concession on the total/published airfare to senior citizens has already been taken up with the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The reply is still awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard with the receipt of the reply from the Ministry".

**1.22 The Committee had recommended that all schemes for senior citizens should be aimed at the target group 60+ in accordance with Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and suitable instructions should be issued to all concerned in this regard. The Committee had desired that concessions on airfare to senior citizens should be on the minimum fare of that day rather than the full fare ticket. The Ministry have stated that the matter has been taken up with Air India and some private airlines and their reply is still awaited. The Committee desire that the matter may again be vigorously pursued with Air India, for early decision.**

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 2, Para No. 2)**

2.1 The Committee note that the population of senior citizens as a percentage of total population stood at 7.5% as per the 2001 census. The population is likely to increase to 12.4% in 2026 as per the report of the Technical Group on Population Projections constituted by the National Commission on Population. Further, as per the United Nations Projections on old age population in India, the overall population in India by the year 2050 will grow by 55% but more alarmingly, the population of people in their 60 years and above will increase by 326% and those in the age group of 80+ by 700% which is the fastest growing group. The Committee are, however, dismayed to note that the issue of rapid population ageing in the country has not received due attention of the Government and the community at large. The Committee feel that to meet squarely the daunting task of providing adequate social security, healthcare and other welfare measures to senior citizens, there is an imperative need for integrated plan of action involving various Departments and stakeholders. Since the community has a big role in ensuring the well- being of senior citizens, they should be actively involved and their views taken on board while formulating such a plan. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Government to put in place a robust integrated action plan expeditiously with due consultation with all the stakeholders and the elders and earnestly implement the same with in a definite time frame to fulfil the Nation's commitment to address the serious problems of senior citizens.

#### **Reply of the Government**

2.2 The Ministry has developed an Annual Action Plan on various activities with a definite time frame to work for the welfare of senior citizens. The Ministry works closely in coordination with State Governments/UT Administrations, related Central Ministries like Rural Development, Health and Family Welfare etc., Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Societies through

National Council of Senior Citizens meetings, National Conference on Ageing, Regional Conferences of State Social Welfare Secretaries and Consultation meetings to draw up a plan of Action in the form of suitable recommendations for more effective implementation of various programmes for the welfare of senior citizens.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No.10, Para No. 10)**

2.3 The Committee note that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) since 1992 with the objective of improving the quality of life of senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care, basically through Government/Non-Government Organizations, Panchayati Raj Institutions/local bodies, etc. Important projects supported under the scheme are old age homes, Mobile Medicare Units and respite care homes and continuous care homes. The Committee are anguished at the low physical and financial performance of the scheme under IPOP for the last three years. Surprisingly, against a paltry budget allocation of Rs. 40 cr., only Rs. 20.67 cr. could be utilized during 2010-11, the position was equally discouraging during the previous years. The reasons enumerated for the trend include late receipt of proposals, incomplete documents, late response from the States/UTs in clarification of procedure, etc. The Committee take serious note of underutilization of allocated funds as programmes/projects such as running of old age homes, day care centers and Mobile Medicare Units have grievously suffered. The Committee recommend that the Ministry look into the reasons for non-utilization of funds, bottlenecks in the implementation and streamline their procedure so that the funds earmarked for the welfare of older persons are well spent and the lapse of fund does not become a recurring theme.

## **Reply of the Government**

2.4 The Ministry has found that the reasons for under-utilization/non-utilisation of allocated funds under Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) are either due to delay in the submission of project proposals by the State Governments or due to submission of proposals with incomplete supporting papers or papers not in the prescribed format as given under the Guidelines. To avoid such problems, this Ministry in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed an online submission and processing system of proposals for grants-in-aid under the Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) which will be operationalized from the current financial year 2014-15. This is expected to make the system more transparent and enable speedy release of grants to the NGOs. The status and sanction of grant will be available online and will also be easily available for monitoring.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 11, Para No. 11)**

2.5 The Committee are concerned to note the large disparity in release of grant-in-aid for old age homes under IPOP scheme in various States. The Secretary, while testifying before the Committee, stated that there were about 296 old age homes in the country and concentrated in a few States. It was pointed out that some States have been quite active while others have not taken the benefit of the scheme. The Committee desire that the Ministry should approach and persuade the States, lagging behind in taking benefit of the scheme, to send complete and viable proposals so that funds can be released to them for running old age homes.

## **Reply of the Government**

2.6 The Ministry has put in place a system of Notional Allocation to States/UTs under the Scheme. At the beginning of every financial year while conveying the Notional Allocation, the

State Governments/UTs are requested to identify and recommend adequate number of feasible new project proposals as well as to recommend the ongoing/continuing projects in the first quarter of Financial Year so that grants to the NGOs are released well in time within the Financial Year. During Regional Conferences and other meetings, States/UTs are persuaded to send complete and viable proposals so that funds can be released to them for running old age homes. However, during 2013-14, complete proposals under the IPOP Scheme were not received from all States/UTs. As a result of this, it has been decided that priority/preference will be given to the proposals received from unserved/underserved States/Districts to ensure equal geographical spread.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 13, Para No.13)**

2.7 The Committee note with deep concern the rising population of senior citizens residing in rural areas and the problems faced by them. The deposition of the representatives of an NGO that the rural elderly are facing deprivation, discrimination and abuse only reinforces the worry of the Committee. The Committee are distressed to note that no State, Panchayati Raj institution and local body had, reportedly, approached/sent their proposal seeking financial assistance/grant in aid under the scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons for running any scheme for the welfare of senior citizens. The Committee desire the Ministry to sensitize the State Governments and local bodies so that programmes for welfare of senior citizens are implemented in rural areas through day care centres and other measures with the help of Panchayati Raj institutions and local bodies. If necessary, the Ministry may consider releasing funds for undertaking welfare programmes to these institutions under IPOP. Needless to say, this would go a long way in helping the senior citizens residing in rural areas, thereby giving them access to healthcare, recreation, entertainment and peer interaction.

IPOP Scheme specifies that assistance will be sanctioned to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) undertaking activities for welfare of senior citizens. However, Ministry does not receive applications from the PRIs. Ministry has requested the State Governments/UT Administrations to encourage PRIs of their respective States to apply for funds under IPOP. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has expressed that this Ministry may consider providing appropriate roles to panchayats while finalising Action Plans in the Scheme. This matter will be examined by the Ministry while revising the IPOP Scheme.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.8 IPOP Scheme specifies that assistance will be sanctioned to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) undertaking activities for welfare of senior citizens. However, Ministry does not receive applications from the PRIs. Ministry has requested the State Governments/UT Administrations to encourage PRIs of their respective States to apply for funds under IPOP. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has expressed that this Ministry may consider providing appropriate roles to panchayats while finalising Action Plans in the Scheme. This matter will be examined by the Ministry while revising the IPOP Scheme.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 15, Para No. 15)**

2.9 The Committee are concerned to note that the procedure for release of Grant-in-aid under the scheme of IPOP is very long and cumbersome as submitted by the NGOs in their Memoranda to the Committee. Statedly, quite often the proposals are held up at the State level and it becomes difficult for the NGOs to submit the same to the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Taking note of the assurance of the Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, that efforts are being made to design an online portal for receipt of applications and the examination of proposals by an independent agency, the Committee recommend that the online portal be opened and made operational expeditiously and the



examination of proposals be made by an independent agency and the Committee apprised. Also the details of the NGOs, the list of beneficiaries, grants given and details of the projects undertaken should be uploaded on the website of the Ministry in order to bring greater transparency and accountability in the working of the scheme.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.10 The data on the release of Grants-in- Aid to the NGOs have been uploaded in the website of the Ministry. Online submission and processing of the proposals for grants under the Scheme to the NGOs has been developed in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC) and will be operationalized from the current financial year ie., 2014-15 for making the system more transparent and speedy release of grants to the NGOs. Status and sanction of grant will be available on the online system and will also be easily available for monitoring. As regards examination of NGO proposals to be made by an independent agency, the same is under consideration.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 16, Para No. 16)**

2.11 The Committee have also been informed that the cost norms of the Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older People (IPOP) were last revised w.e.f. 01.04.2008. Besides increase in amount of financial assistance for existing projects, several innovative projects were added as being eligible for assistance under the scheme. Since more than five years have passed when the scheme was last revised and keeping in view the inflation rate and the cost of living index, the Committee recommend that the cost norms of the scheme be revised with a sense of urgency. The Ministry should urgently take action in the matter and inform the Committee in this regard.

## **Reply of the Government**

2.12 The cost norms of the scheme of IPOP have been prepared and circulated for Inter-Ministerial consultations. After receipt of the comments from the concerned central Ministries/Departments, the cost norms of the scheme would be finalized incorporating the views of the concerned Ministries/Departments and will be placed before the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) for approval.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II  
Dated 09.06.2014)

## **Recommendation (Sl. No. 19, Para No. 19)**

2.13 The Committee note that Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) have issued instructions on healthcare for senior citizens to Chief Executive Officer of all General Health Insurance Companies, which includes their entry upto 65 years of age. The Committee desire that the Government should work on a health insurance scheme on the lines of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) for the senior citizens or the RSBY universalised.

## **Reply of the Government**

2.14 The Government launched the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) to provide smart card based cashless health insurance cover of Rs. 30,000/- per annum on family floater to BPL families (a unit of five) and also to those working in the unorganised sectors, in a phased manner. RSBY is extended to senior citizens working in the unorganised sectors.

The IRDA (Health Insurance) Regulations, 2013 provides for entry age of at least upto 65 years. It also provides that renewals (without any time gap) thereafter shall not be denied on the ground of age. Thus, in effect, there is insurance coverage without any age limit. Moreover, there are many products which have no restriction in entry age as well. As per the Regulations, the insurance companies would not ordinarily deny insurance cover for the first time upto the

age of 65 but they do have their underwriting norms that allow them to deny cover on the basis of health conditions and other parameters.

Further, there are number of products available in the market, especially for senior citizens like (i) National Insurance Company Limited's "VarishtaMedicclaim", (ii) Oriental Insurance Company Limited's "Hope Health of Privileged Elders"; (iii) United India Insurance Company Limited's "Individual Health Insurance Policy-Senior Citizens" and (iv) Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited's 'Senior Citizens Red Carpet Health Insurance Policy'.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 20, Para No. 20)**

2.15 The Committee note that the Ministry of Rural Development is implementing the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) under which Central Assistance is given towards pension @ Rs. 200/- per month to persons above 60 years and Rs. 500/- per month to persons above 80 years belonging to a household below poverty line, which is to be supplemented by the States. The Committee feel that the pension provided under the scheme is too low and desire that senior citizens in the country should at least get an old age pension of Rs. 1000/- pm. The Committee also desire that the criteria of below poverty line for availing old age pension needs to be revised and may be universalized for all non-income tax payers.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.16 As per information received from Ministry of Rural Development, on the direction of the Union Cabinet, Ministry of Rural Development constituted a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr.Mihir Shah, Planning Commission, to prepare a proposal for Comprehensive National Social Assistance Programme. The Task Force considered all the issues, demands and suggestions relating to pensions, received from various quarters. The

Task Force has submitted its report to the Ministry. The recommendations of the Task Force relate mainly to revision of eligibility criteria, enhancing the quantum of assistance and strengthening the administrative structure. The recommendations of the Task Force have been examined in detail by the Ministry of Rural Development and accepted with some modifications. Action has been initiated to take the approval of the Competent Authority.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 21, Para No. 21)**

2.17 Mindful of the deplorable conditions of the destitute and the widows, the Committee urge that priority be accorded to them in the grant of old age pension. The Committee recommend that local Government bodies be persuaded to identify the most needy class of old age pensioners with the help of NGOs and the community so as to help them get access to pension. Due assistance may also be extended to the people without a permanent address/bank account, etc. so that all deserving people get old age pension.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.18 The Ministry of Rural Development, on the basis of the recommendations of the Task force constituted by them are taking necessary action for obtaining approval of the Cabinet in the matter as explained in reply to para 20 above.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 22, Para No. 22)**

2.19 The Committee note that the Ministry of Rural Development have laid out a procedure for monitoring of the Central Assistance schemes like the National Social Assistance

Programme (NSAP), which provides pension to the senior citizens. The Committee were apprised that the scheme is to be reviewed by the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (V&MC) constituted at the District level. MPs have representation in these Committees. The Committee recommend that the States hold monitoring meetings at least every three months to vigorously monitor the pension schemes at the District and State levels and give the requisite feed back to the Ministry of Rural Development.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.20 As per information received from Ministry of Rural Development, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is included in the list of schemes to be reviewed by the Vigilance & Monitoring Committees(V&MCs) constituted at the District Level, along with other Rural Development Schemes. Members of Parliament are represented in the V&MCs in the Districts. As per the guidelines, issued by the Ministry of Rural Development to the State Governments, the V&MC meetings are required to be held in every quarter of the year.

The other monitoring mechanisms that have been put in place are as follows:-

- (a) The process of implementation of the schemes is monitored by the Ministry of Rural Development through Monthly Progress Reports given by the States / UTs in the prescribed formats. Non-reporting of the physical and financial progress reports is construed as lack of progress and therefore, it may result in non-release of ACA for the last quarter of the financial year. The performance of the programme is reviewed with Secretaries once in a quarter during the Performance Review Committee (PRC) meetings of the Ministry;
- (b) Social Audit and Annual Verification has been introduced under NSAP for improved monitored, accountability and transparency. All the States are to complete the Annual Verification by 30<sup>th</sup> June and the Social Audit by 30<sup>th</sup> September, each year;

A check list for the schemes under NSAP is provided to the National Level Monitors (NLMs) during their field visits. Each NLM is advised to visit the district, block and village level offices and meet the Government functionaries, public representatives and the beneficiaries to get feedback on the implementation of the schemes under NSAP.

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### **Recommendation (SI. No. 24, Para No. 24)**

2.21 The Committee note that the Ministry of Finance also provides certain concessions to the senior citizens in terms of income tax exemption for the senior citizens which is Rs. 2.50 lakh per annum to persons above 60 years and Rs. 5.00 lakh to persons above 80 years. The Committee feel that the exemption should be raised periodically keeping in view the increasing cost of living, including food, housing and the prohibitive cost of healthcare of the senior citizens.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.22 The recommendations of the Standing Committee have been conveyed to Ministry of Finance for implementation. The Action taken is awaited from that Ministry. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken as and when the reply from the Ministry is received.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

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### **Recommendation (SI. No. 25, Para No. 25)**

2.23 The Committee note that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 has been enacted to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. The Act has been brought into force by individual State Governments. The Committee find that about 7 State Governments and one UT are still to frame rules under the

Act, appoint maintenance officers, constitute maintenance Tribunals, etc., which mainly include Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. The Committee desire that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment pursue with the State Governments for putting in place expeditiously the prescribed machinery and framework for the implementation of the Act with stringent monitoring mechanism.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.24 The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in December 2007, inter-alia to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. Consequent upon notifying the Act, the State Governments/UT Administration are required to the following necessary/steps for effective implementation of the Act:-

- (i) Frame Rules u/s 32;
- (ii) Appoint Maintenance Officer u/s 18(1);
- (iii) Constitute Maintenance Tribunals u/s 7(1); and
- (iv) Constitute Appellate Tribunals u/s 15 (1)

As per records, 16 States and 6 UTs have taken all the above necessary steps. State Governments/UT Administrations from time to time have been requested to complete all consequential steps for effective implementation of the Act. However, there are many States and UTs which have not yet taken the consequential steps. Keeping this in view, the status implementation of the Act is also discussed in Annual Regional Conferences held with the State/UT Social Welfare Department/Ministers, as well as during the visit of senior Ministry officers to the States/UTs.

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 26, Para No. 26)**

2.25 The Committee understand that under the provisions of the Act, the State Governments are required to prescribe a comprehensive action plan for providing protection to the life and property of senior citizens. However, the Committee were informed that only 6 states – Goa, Tripura, Haryana, Mizoram, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and 4 UTs namely Chandigarh, Delhi, Puducherry and Daman & Diu have devised an action plan for providing security to the life and property of senior citizens. The Committee note that protection of the life and property is very important aspect of the Act since crimes against senior citizens have become common especially in urban areas. The Committee desire that effective steps should be taken by the States to give protection and a sense of security to the senior citizens residing in both urban and rural areas.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.26 The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued two detailed advisories dated 27-3-2008 and 30-8-2013, to all the State Governments/UTs advising them to take immediate measures to ensure safety and security and for elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence against old persons through initiatives such as identification of senior citizens; sensitization of police personnel regarding safety, security of older persons; regular visit of the beat staff; setting up of toll free senior citizen helpline; setting up of senior citizen security cell; verification of domestic helps, drivers etc.

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 27, Para No. 27)**

2.27 The Committee note from the information furnished by the Ministry that many of the European countries, especially the Scandinavian countries, which have sizeable population of elderly people, provide many facilities for their senior citizens through municipalities and Government agencies, which include home help, healthcare and cooked meals. The Committee feel that the Government of India should endeavour to adopt best practices from these countries and elsewhere for the welfare of senior citizens in our country and a detailed study in this regard should be carried out by the Ageing Division of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.28 National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) has been directed to undertake a detailed study on the best practices, being adopted by other countries, for the welfare of senior citizens.

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 28, Para No. 28)**

2.29 Having regard to the fact that programmes and schemes for the welfare of the older persons are run by different Ministries/Departments and various concessions, relaxations, facilities and priorities are accorded to them, the Committee recommend that an exhaustive compendium of all such benefits extended by the Union Government be brought out and periodically updated as a ready reference manual for the older persons and the stakeholder.

## **Reply of the Government**

2.30 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment maintains a compilation of various concessions, relaxations and facilities, being extended by all the Central Ministries, for the welfare of Senior Citizens. This compilation has been included in the Annual Report and uploaded in the Ministry's website as a ready reference manual for the senior citizens and others related to them. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has requested all these Central Ministriesto update us annually so that the compilation may be updated accordingly. The compilation of benefits would also be incorporated in the training manuals of the trainings undertaken for caregivers and NGOs, working for the welfare of senior citizens, at National Institute of Social Defence (NISD).

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 29, Para No. 29)**

2.31 Taking cognizance of the diversity and enormity of the problems confronting the aged, the Committee recommend that the proposed new National Policy on Older Persons must adopt a multipronged strategy to address the problems of the elders with variegated socio-economic conditions and make provision for their independence, social integration, care and dignity. The policy so evolved specifically needs to make provision for the shelter and care of the aged destitute as well as the elders who are desolate, physically infirm but financially independent. The Government may so integrate their welfare programmes that the elders in old age homes/service apartments are able to interact and educate the children in orphanages

or schools. Special concession may be given to the destitute widow or widower who enter into matrimonial alliance after sixty years of age.

### **Reply of the Government**

2.32 The new National Policy prescribes that innovative practices will be tried and tested by attaching the existing Old Age Care Homes with the existing Child Care Homes, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, Anganwadi Centers and alike, being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development wherein healthy and capable elderly women can contribute in quality upbringing of the children. The new National Policy will be placed before the Cabinet for approval. After its approval, necessary action will be taken to integrate welfare programmes of elderly in Old Age Homes and children in orphanages or schools.

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## CHAPTER – III

### **Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 9, Para No. 9)**

3.1 The Committee are pleased to note that for the effective implementation of the new policy, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment propose to expand the Department of Disability Affairs and rechristen it as 'Department of Disability Affairs and Senior Citizens'. The Committee while welcoming the laudable move, would like the new Department to be adequately strengthened with professional human resource and material resources so as to meet the lofty objectives of the welfare of our senior citizens, the most neglected section of society, as per good International norms and standards.

#### **Reply of the Government**

3.2 The proposal for formation of Department of Disability Affairs and Social Defence was sent to the Cabinet Secretariat for placing before the Cabinet for approval. The Cabinet Secretariat has examined the proposal and has decided that for the present, the status quo should be maintained.

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#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 12, Para 12)**

3.3 The Committee note that there is a felt need for more old age homes in the country. The Committee feel that the Union Government need to address this issue so that old age homes are available in all districts of the country given the growing requirements. The Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation contained in the 36<sup>th</sup> Report on Demands for Grants (2013-14) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment that liberal central assistance

should be provided for the construction of old age homes in each district of the country. The Committee also desire that the plan of old age homes needs to be standardised so that specific norms and guidelines are chalked out for design of the building and the manpower and expertise much needed for running old age homes.

### **Reply of the Government**

3.4 During the year 2012-13, an amount of Rs.80.00 crore was allocated for the new Scheme for construction of old age homes for indigent senior citizens. The Ministry had approached the Planning Commission for seeking 'in-principle' approval for the proposed Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely, "Assistance for establishment of old age homes for indigent senior citizens".

The Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission vide letter dated 30.10.2012 informed that the proposed Scheme was earlier examined by the Planning Commission and they had earlier replied vide letter dated 15.2.2011 that Section 19(1) of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 vests the responsibility of setting up of old age homes with the State Governments. Accordingly, it is entirely the responsibility of the State Governments to establish old age homes for indigent senior citizens. The Planning Commission was of the view that in-situ rehabilitation facilitated by the National Old Age Pension Scheme is much better and also in keeping with the Indian culture, rather than put senior citizens in separate old age homes. Further, Planning Commission stated that running old age homes is largely a non-recurring expenditure and it would therefore, be more appropriate if such Schemes are run by the State Governments. Keeping in view the reply of the Planning Commission, the Ministry could not proceed further in this matter. As indicated in our earlier reply, the Ministry intends taking up the issue with the Planning Commission for State-wise allocation of Additional Central Assistance (ACA) for establishment of old age homes for indigent senior citizens.

As regards plan for construction of Old Age Homes, the same depends on the socio-environmental and cultural impact of the area in a particular State/UT. The Scheme of IPOP also prescribes norms for staff for running and maintenance of various projects under the Scheme. Specific norms with reference to Manpower have been mentioned in the guidelines of the scheme IPOP for engaging the staff for running the projects.

At present, most of the Old Age Homes (OAHs), supported by the Ministry are operating in rented accommodation. It is, therefore, not possible to have standardization of buildings. Besides, the funds released by the Ministry are not adequate for old age homes to follow specific norms and guidelines for hiring of manpower and expertise, much needed for running old age homes. Standardization for Old Age Homes (OAHs) can be ensured once these OAHs are constructed with the funds released by this Ministry. It may not be out of place to mention that the cost norms of the various components of the projects /programmes operating under the IPOP Scheme are under revision.

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## **CHAPTER – IV**

### **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 4, Para No. 4)**

4.1 The Committee were informed that the Ministry have set up an expert committee to formulate a few new schemes under the XII<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for the welfare of the senior citizens which include the scheme for awareness generation for Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior citizens Act 2007, setting up a helpline for senior citizens at the National and District Levels, setting up a National Commission for senior citizens, and setting up a National Trust for the Aged. The Committee are anguished to note that the above schemes incorporated in the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan have not taken off so far, though, almost two precious years of the Plan period have elapsed. The Committee recommend that the Ministry take urgent necessary action so that these schemes are operationalized at the earliest.

#### **Reply of the Government**

4.2 Proposal for setting up a helpline for senior citizens at the National and District Levels is under active consideration of the Expert Committee set up by the Ministry. Appropriate action on setting up of other new schemes has also been initiated in consultation with experts in the field of geriatrics. The Standing Committee will be apprised of the action taken accordingly.

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#### **Comments of Committee**

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

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 6)**

4.3 The Committee note that the National Policy on older persons was announced in January 1999. Though the Policy had several features like State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons to improve the quality of their lives, the implementation has been rather tardy and there is no coordination mechanism to effectively implement the policy. In view of the new demographic changes and to address the upfront areas viz. citizens of 80+, elderly women, rural poor and unorganized sectors, the Government, notably, set up a Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. (Smt.) V. MohiniGiri to draft a new National Policy on senior citizens, which submitted its report on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2011. The Committee are deeply distressed that even after two years of submission of the new draft National Policy on Senior Citizens, the policy was yet to be finalized and implemented. Taking serious note of the tardy implementation of the 1999 policy and the inordinate delay in finalization of the new National policy on senior citizens, the Committee deplore the apathy and neglect on the part of the Government to address the problems of senior citizens. Though, the Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment assured the Committee that efforts were being made to finalise the policy by the end of the financial year 2013-14, yet taking note of the unconscionable delay, the Committee recommend that the Ministry take urgent action so as to ensure that the new National Policy on Senior Citizens is finalized and implemented expeditiously without further loss of time and they be apprised.

### **Reply of the Government**

4.4 Though the proposed new policy is based on the National Policy on Older Persons, 1999, it is an improvement which takes into account the present demographic pattern, socio-economic needs, social value system, advancement in science and technology and other relevant fields. Compared to the present policy, the new policy is more comprehensive and all encompassing. The approved National Policy for Senior Citizens could not be processed further on account of operation of the model code of conduct. With the election of the new



Government and new Ministers in each Ministry, the process for obtaining approval of the competent authority to the proposed new National Policy has been initiated.

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### **Comments of Committee**

(Please see Para 1.3 of Chapter – I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 7, Para No. 7)**

4.5 The Committee deprecate to note that the new National Council for Senior Citizens constituted on 22.2.2012, under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, has been largely dysfunctional as no meeting of the Council has been held, though required to meet twice in a year. As the National Council for Senior Citizens is an apex body on the policies and programmes for senior citizens, the Committee urge that the Council may be fully functionalized at the earliest alongwith constitution of State Level Councils for senior citizens in all the States and the Committee apprised.

### **Reply of the Government**

4.6 Under Section 32 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, Rules are to be framed by the respective State Governments/Union Territories providing *inter-alia* for the constitution of State Council for Senior Citizens and District Committees. Chapter VII of the Model Rules vide Rule 21, the States may, by order, establish a State Council for Senior Citizens to advise the State Governments on effective implementation of the Act. As per available records, 5 States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and 3 Union Territories ie., Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh and NCT of Delhi, have so far constituted the State Council for Senior Citizens. The first meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens was scheduled to be held in the month of June 2014 in

Hyderabad. However, due to pre-occupation of the Hon'ble Minister (SJ&E), the meeting has been postponed. The matter regarding constitution of State Councils for senior citizens in all the States will be discussed in the meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens, whenever it is held.

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### **Comments of Committee**

(Please see Para 1.16 of Chapter – I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 14, Para No. 14)**

4.7 The Committee are dismayed to observe that the number of Mobile Medicare Units (MMUs) assisted under the scheme have gone down from 38 units in year 2011-12 to 29 units in 2012-13. The Committee are of the firm view that MMUs are an important part of the IPOP scheme and, therefore, stress that more MMUs should be assisted, especially in rural and inaccessible areas deprived of medical care as old people, who at times, confined to their homes and bedridden, are unable to travel. MMUs should also regularly organize health camps in remote and distant areas so that more people can avail the benefits.

### **Reply of the Government**

4.8 The Integrated Programme for Older Persons, a Central Sector Scheme, releases more funds for Mobile Medicare Unit (MMUs) for older persons living in slums, rural and inaccessible areas where proper health facilities are not available. The project Mobile Medicare Units aims to enable older people to assume an active role in maintaining and improving their own health and in encouraging others to do the same. Each MMU covers at least 400 persons per month. Grants-in-aid under this MMU is given to agencies that have shown a credible track record working for the cause of elderly and organizations that have proven track record in providing free medical care to the people are eligible for funding. The State Governments are

requested from time to time to forward new cases of MMU along with other cases admissible for assistance under the scheme from service deficient areas. Recognized charitable hospitals/Nursing homes/Medical Institutions/colleges are also eligible seeking grants-in-aid. The State Governments will also be advised to issue suitable directions to the MMU located in their areas to organize health camps in remote areas on regular basis.

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### **Comments of Committee**

(Please see Para 1.19 of Chapter – I of the Report)

## CHAPTER - V

### Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature

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

5.1 The Committee note that the International community was sensitized to the needs of the senior citizens in first ever World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982 which was followed by adoption of five principles for older persons by the United Nations on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1991 viz. independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity as safeguards for the senior citizens. Notably, these laudable principles were enshrined in Article 41 of Constitution of India as Directive Principles of State Policy much before these were adopted by the UN. The Committee, however, recommend the Government to strive persistently to invoke these basic principles with unflinching determination and resolve for the welfare of the older persons. Though India traditionally enjoyed robust joint family system taking full care of elderly persons, however, the Committee note with deep concern that with the fast changing socio- economic conditions, disintegration of joint family system and emergence of nuclear families, the old people are getting increasingly neglected adversely affecting their care and dignity. It is, therefore, important that Government and the community play a proactive role in taking care of the elderly. The Committee ardently hopes that with the positive programmatic and policy intervention by the Government for the welfare of senior citizens and the progressive implementation of the laudable goals set for the old people in the UN resolution and in our own Directive Principles of State Policy would enable the senior citizens to lead a life of dignity and self-fulfillment. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, in consultation with the Ministries of Commerce and External Affairs, apprise the Committee about the status of ratification of the said UN resolution by India in due course.

## **Reply of the Government**

5.2 The well-being of senior citizens is mandated in the Constitution of India under Article 41 which, inter-alia, provides that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to public assistance in cases of old age. Further, Article 47 provides that the State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties. The Right to Equality is guaranteed by the Constitution as a fundamental right and Social Security is the concurrent responsibility of the Central and State Governments.

To fulfill the constitutional obligations and its commitment at the global level concerning the issues of elderly, the Government of India became a signatory to the Madrid Plan of Action and the United Nations Principles for Senior Citizens adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2002; the Proclamation on Ageing and the Global Targets on Ageing for the Year 2001 adopted by the General Assembly in 1992; the Shanghai Plan of Action, 2002; and the Macau Outcome Document 2007 adopted by UNESCAP which forms the basis for the global policy guidelines concerning care of ageing population. From these the Government of India has demonstrated its commitment to design and implement policies caring elderly people from time to time.

The Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce have been consulted regarding the ratification of the UN resolution by India. Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has informed that the concerned subject does not pertain to them and hence has no comments to offer in this regard. Reply from the Ministry of External Affairs is awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken as and when the reply from the Ministry is received.

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 3)**

5.3 The Committee are deeply concerned to note that there are no specific programmes/schemes to address the particular needs and challenges of 80+ age group which is projected to increase manifold (700%) in the next 20-30 years. This age group is most vulnerable and runs the risk of getting dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson disease, depression, etc. in their older years. The Committee, therefore, recommend that an expert group of representatives of all concerned Departments be constituted to devise specialized health care programme for the 80+ group.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.4 The new National Policy for Senior Citizens 2013, to be placed before the Cabinet for approval, lays special focus on the welfare of senior citizens in the age group of 80 years and above. After the approval of the National Policy by the Cabinet, an expert group of representatives will be constituted to devise specialized health care programme for the 80+ group in consultation with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

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### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 5)**

5.5 The Committee note that as per the census of India's projected value of expectation of life at birth (2011-15), the life expectancy of males and females is 67.3 years and 69.6 years respectively. The Committee also note that the National Policy for Senior Citizens recognizes productive ageing as the key to the welfare of senior citizens between the age of 60-70 years. The Committee feel that with the increase in the life expectancy and relatively better state of health of people, the Government need to look at continuity of employment upto 65 years/or

greater post retirement opportunities for the senior citizens so that the society continue to draw upon their experience and tap their talent. The Committee would like the Ministry to seriously consider the various options which would include reviewing the age of retirement, reemployment opportunities for the retired persons subject to their physical fitness and mental agility and setting up a Directorate of Employment and Rehabilitation for Senior Citizens.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.6 The issues raised by the committee have been noted. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 enacted by Parliament in December, 2007 defines Senior Citizen as any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above. Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare has launched an initiative, named 'Sankalp' to channelize skill and expertise of retired Government servants into constructive activity for betterment of society. This initiative will contribute to a sense of fulfilment and hence to a happier, healthier and longer life for pensioners. The Scheme is being run as a pilot restricted to 500 pensioners.

As regards setting up a Directorate of Employment and Rehabilitation for Senior Citizens, the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Labour & Employment and Department of Personnel and Training for their comments/views. The reply from these Ministries is awaited. Action taken report will be submitted, on receipt of the requisite information from these Ministries.

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### **Comments of Committee**

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

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 8, Para No. 8)**

5.7 The Committee note that the new draft policy sets out upfront areas needing very special attention i.e. senior citizens in the age group of 80+, elderly women, rural poor and the unorganized sector. The Committee welcome the focus on these sections which are the most vulnerable and are facing increasing neglect and deprivation, poverty and abuse. Undoubtedly, these sections are in dire need of social security and special health care facilities. The Committee, therefore, ardently urge the Ministry to formulate suitable schemes for the dignified care of these vulnerable sections with adequate funding and get them implemented expeditiously.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.8 Senior citizens above the age of 80 years (Oldest Old) are already being benefitted from the on-going policies and schemes of the Ministry meant for the welfare of senior citizens at large. However, due to growing vulnerability of senior citizens above 80 years of age, the new National Policy 2013 lays special focus on the welfare of these Oldest Old. The new National Policy has to be placed before the Cabinet for its approval. After the approval of the Cabinet, an expert group of representatives from State Governments, Central Ministries, NGOs and civil societies will be set up to formulate suitable schemes/programmes for dignified care of these vulnerable section with adequate funding facilities.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 17, Para No. 17)**

5.9 The Committee note that the Regional Resource and Training Centres (RRTCs) is an innovative project introduced in the revised scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP). The Committee are unhappy to observe that only 4 RRTCs have been supported



under the scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that at least one RRTC should be designated in each state so as to maintain a data base of institutions working in the field of old age care, the number of old age persons who are destitute and need help, organise training programmes in gerontology and liaison with State Government Departments dealing with welfare of senior citizens whenever required.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.10 The Ministry has written D.O. letter to the State Governments requesting them, specifically, to explore the possibilities of designating one of the suitable State Training Institutes to function as RRTC in the State/UT under the Scheme. Reply from State Governments in this regard is awaited.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 18, Para No. 18)**

5.11 The Committee note that the National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) is an important programme which aims to provide separate and specialized healthcare to the senior citizens. Due to the decline in the physical ability and increasing susceptibility to diseases, the elderly need dedicated healthcare facilities, especially the age group of 80+. The Committee note that 100 districts in 21 States have so far been covered under the NPHCE programme and geriatric daily clinics have been established in 65 district hospitals and geriatric wards established in 53 district hospitals. Also 8 Regional geriatric centres have been opened in regional centres in major hospitals throughout the country. Further, the National Institute of Ageing (NIA) at AIIMS, New Delhi and Madras Medical College, Chennai is to be established during XII Five Year Plan for which Rs. 1710.13 cr. have

been approved during the Plan period. Appreciative of the Government resolve to improve the coverage of NPHCE, the Committee recommend that:

- (i) Geriatric healthcare should be extended in all the districts of the country.
- (ii) Given the projection of manifold increase in old age population of the country in the next 20 years, super speciality hospitals be set up exclusively for geriatric care in all the State capitals,
- (iii) Wide publicity be given to the scheme so that the senior citizens become aware of the facilities existing in the various Regional Hospitals and District Hospitals for them and avail the same without hassles.
- (iv) Directions may be issued to and it may be ensured that all Government Hospitals, district centres and healthcare centres have separate queues and seating arrangements for the elderly persons so that they get access to healthcare facilities on priority without discomfiture while waiting for their turn *inter se*.
- (v) The population of 80+ should be given priority over others in availing all medical facilities.
- (vi) Suitable training be imparted to the care givers of the old age population so that they handle the cases with greater sensitivity and professionalism.

### **Reply of the Government**

- 5.12 (i) During the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the major components of the National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly(NPHCE) were establishment of 30 bedded Department of Geriatrics in 8 Medical Institutions identified as Regional Geriatric Centres in different regions of the country and to provide dedicated health care facilities in District Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs and Sub-Centres levels in 100 identified districts of 21 states. During the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, it is proposed to

cover additional 225 districts under the programme and to develop 12 additional Regional Geriatric Centres in selected Medical Colleges of the country.

- (ii) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, implementing National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) has been requested to set up super-speciality hospitals for geriatric care in all the State capitals. In the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, it is proposed to establish National Institute of Ageing at AIIMS, New Delhi and Madras Medical College, Chennai, under the NPHCE. Reply from the concerned Ministry is awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard on receipt of reply from the Ministry.
- (iii) National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) is being implemented by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Under the Programme, Health Education Programmes using mass media, folk media and other communications channels are being promoted to reach out to the target community for promoting the concept of healthy ageing. In addition to this, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been requested to develop Action Plan for wide publicity to the scheme so that the senior citizens become aware of the facilities existing in the various Regional Hospitals and District Hospitals for them and avail the same without hassles. Reply from the concerned Ministry is awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard on receipt of reply from the Ministry.
- (iv) Though Government Hospitals maintain separate queues for senior citizens, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been requested to issue a directive to all the Government Hospitals/Public Health Centres/District Centres etc. to ensure separate queues and seating arrangements for the senior citizens so that they get access to healthcare facilities on priority without discomfiture while waiting for

their turn. Reply from the concerned Ministry is awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard on receipt of reply from the Ministry.

- (v) National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) is being implemented by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been requested to direct all the Government Hospitals/Public Health Centres/District Centres etc., to give priority to senior citizens above 80 years over other senior citizens in availing all medical facilities. Reply from the concerned Ministry is awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard on receipt of reply from the Ministry.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II  
Dated 09.06.2014)

**Recommendation (Sl. No. 23, Para No. 23)**

5.13 The Committee are pleased to note that the Ministry of Railways provides facilities for senior citizens, such as separate ticket counters for senior citizens at various centres and concessional rail fares for senior citizens. The Committee are, however, surprised that the National Carrier, Air India, under the Ministry of Civil Aviation offers 50% discount on the Highest Economy class Basic fare to senior citizens who have completed 63 years of age on the date of commencement of journey for travel on Domestic Network. The Committee note that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 defines senior citizens as people of 60 years of age. Therefore, the Committee recommend that all schemes for senior citizens should be aimed at the target group of 60+ and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment should issue mandatory instructions in this regard. Moreover, the concession in airfare should be on the minimum fare of that day and not on the full fare ticket as per the prevalent practice.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.14 The Committee's recommendation to provide 50% concession on the total/actual airfare in Air India to all those who have attained the age of 60 years and to issue suitable instructions to private airlines to provide 50% concession on the total/published airfare to senior citizens has already been taken up with the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The reply is still awaited. The Committee will be apprised of the action taken in this regard with the receipt of the reply from the Ministry.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Comments of Committee**

(Please see Para 1.22 of Chapter – I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 30, Para No. 30)**

5.15 Mindful of the rich cultural heritage of India and the scriptural edicts which proclaim that an assembly must have elders and that one who renders service to the elders, the longevity, knowledge, fame and power of such a person gets enhanced. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India in the Ministry of Human Resource Development may design appropriate syllabus in order to enlighten the awareness of children about great Indian cultural heritage and the esteem in which the elders have been held from time immemorial and the far reaching benefits that accrue from the care and service of the elders.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.16 The recommendations of the Standing Committee have been conveyed to Ministry of Human Resource Development for necessary action. The status report in this regard is awaited from that Ministry.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 31, Para No. 31)**

5.17 The Committee note that the various Ministries of the Government of India run schemes for the welfare of senior citizens, *i.e.* the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Finance, etc. The Committee desire that the Government should strengthen the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for better liaisoning and coordination between the various Ministries implementing the schemes for the welfare of senior citizens, both at the Central and State level. In order to ensure that the elders get proper access to food, shelter and the much needed healthcare in the twilight of their life and that they lead a dignified existence, which is part of the fundamental right to life, the Committee recommend that a permanent standing machinery be created under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) for better conception, coordination and effective implementation of various interdependent programmes for the welfare of elderly people. Given the enormity of the emerging challenges in the next 20 years and the vulnerability of this age group, the Committee recommend that a comprehensive law for the social security and protection of the dignity of senior citizens of the country be enacted at the earliest. The Committee are quite sanguine that if their recommendations are given due consideration and implemented earnestly, the vision of 'grow old' and the 'best of life is yet to be', would get fructified.

### **Reply of the Government**

5.18 The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment liaisons and coordinates between the various Ministries implementing the schemes for the welfare of senior citizens, both at the Central and State level through National Council of Senior Citizens and Regional Conference meetings. The National Council of Senior Citizens is headed by the Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment and meet twice a year. The prime objective of the Council is to

advise Central and State Governments on the entire gamut of issues related to welfare of senior citizens for enhancement of their quality of life. The Council has representatives from all related Central Ministries, National Commissions, State Governments, Members of Parliament, Senior Citizens Associations, Pensioners' Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations working for senior citizens and Experts in the field of Ageing and other related issues. The Council gives the Ministry a platform for better conception, coordination and effective implementation of various interdependent programmes of the Government for the welfare of elderly people.

With regard to Committee's recommendation that a comprehensive law for the social security and protection of the dignity of senior citizens be enacted at the earliest, it may be mentioned that the issue of social security and protection has been highlighted in the new National Policy for Senior Citizens 2013, which has to be placed before the Cabinet for approval. After the approval of the new Policy by the Cabinet, the issue of enacting a comprehensive law for the social security and protection of the dignity of senior citizens will be examined.

(Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, OM No. 15-36(12)/2013-14/AG-II

Dated 09.06.2014)

**NEW DELHI;**

**10 March, 2015**

**19 Phalguna, 1936 (Saka)**

**RAMESH BAIS  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on  
Social Justice and  
Empowerment**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON TUESDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2015.**

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room No. 139, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRMAN**

**MEMBERS**

**LOK SABHA**

6. Shri Jhina Hikaka
7. Shri Bhagwant Khuba
8. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
9. Smt. Maragatham K.
10. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
11. Dr. Udit Raj
12. Prof. Sadhu Singh

**RAJYA SABHA**

13. Shri Ahamed Hassan
14. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
15. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

1. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director



2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairman welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting had been convened to consider and adopt the Seventh Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-ninth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Implementation of schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens" pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), Eighth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fifth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Review of the functioning of National Institutes working in the field of disability" pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), Ninth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fourth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" pertaining to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tenth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-sixth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Implementation of Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme" pertaining to the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

3. Thereafter, the Committee considered and adopted the above Reports without modifications and authorized the Chairman to finalize these Reports and present the same to Parliament.

*The Committee then adjourned.*

## APPENDIX

### ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-NINTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

		Total	Percentage
I.	Total number of Recommendations	31	
II.	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government (Paragraph Nos. 2, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29)	16	51.61
III.	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government (Paragraph Nos. 9 and 12)	2	6.45
IV.	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted (Paragraph Nos. 4, 6, 7 and 14)	4	12.90
V.	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature (Paragraph Nos. 1, 3, 5, 8, 17, 18, 23, 30 and 31)	9	29.04