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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2019-20)**

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2020-21)**

SEVENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2020/Phalguna, 1941 (Saka)

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(DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH
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Presented to Lok Sabha on 03.03.2020

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 03.03.2020



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2020/Phalguna, 1941 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2019-20)**

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
3. Shri Durga Prasad Rao Balli
4. Shri Shafiqur Rahman Barq
5. Shri Bholanath 'B.P. Saroj'
6. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
7. Shri Y. Devendrappa
8. Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
9. Shri Hans Raj Hans
10. Shri Abdul Khaleque
11. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
12. Smt. Geeta Kora
13. Shri Dhanush M. Kumar
14. Shri Vijay Kumar
15. Shri Akshaibar Lal
16. Dr. Lorho S. Pfoze
17. Shri V. Srinivas Prasad
- #18. Shri Prince Raj
19. Shri Arjun Singh
20. Smt. Supriya Sule
21. Smt. Rekha Arun Verma

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
23. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
24. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
25. Shri Biswajit Daimary
26. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
27. Shri P. L. Punia
28. Smt. Wansuk Syiem
29. Shri Ramkumar Verma
30. Vacant
31. Vacant

Nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 9.12.2019.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda Joint Secretary
2. Shri Srinivasulu Gunda Director
3. Smt. Madhu Bhutani Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2019-20) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Seventh Report on 'Demands for Grants for the year 2020-21' pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

2. The Committee considered the 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) which were laid on the Table of the House on 11 February, 2020. After obtaining their Budget related Documents and Explanatory Notes, the Committee took evidence of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) on 18 February, 2020. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at the sitting held on 02 March, 2020.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) for appearing before them and furnishing information in connection with the examination of the 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)'.

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

NEW DELHI;

27 February, 2020
08 Phalguna, 1941 (Saka)

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

REPORT
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTORY

1.1 In order to give focused attention to policy issues and meaningful thrust to the activities aimed at welfare and empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), a separate Department was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and renamed as Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) with effect from December 08, 2014. The Department formulates policy and programmes; oversees their implementation, monitoring and review. The Department also acts as a nodal agency for matters pertaining to disability and persons with disabilities including effecting closer coordination among different stakeholders: related Central Ministries, State/UT Governments, NGOs etc. in matters pertaining to disability.

1.2 As per Census 2011, there are 2.68 crore Persons with Disabilities in India (which constitute 2.21 percent of the total population). Out of the total population of Persons with Disabilities, about 1.50 crore are male and 1.18 crore female. In Rural areas, there are 1.86 crore Persons with Disabilities. Out of which 1.04 crore are male and 82 lakh are female. Similarly in Urban areas, there are 82 lakh Persons with Disabilities. Out of which 46 lakh are male and 36 lakh are female. These include persons with visual, hearing, speech and loco-motor disabilities; mental illness, mental retardation, multiple disabilities and other disabilities. State-wise population of Persons with Disabilities as per census 2011 is as under:

Sl.No.	State	Total disabled population as per Census 2011
1	Andhra Pradesh	1219785
2	Arunachal Pradesh	26,734
3	Assam	4,80,065
4	Bihar	23,31,009
5	Chhattisgarh	6,24,937
6	Delhi	2,34,882

7	Goa	33,012
8	Gujarat	10,92,302
9	Haryana	5,46,374
10	Himachal Pradesh	1,55,316
11	J&K	3,61,153
12	Jharkhand	7,69,980
13	Karnataka	13,24,205
14	Kerala	7,61,843
15	Madhya Pradesh	15,51,931
16	Maharashtra	29,63,392
17	Manipur	58,547
18	Mizoram	15,160
19	Meghalaya	44,317
20	Nagaland	29,631
21	Odisha	12,44,402
22	Punjab	6,54,063
23	Rajasthan	15,63,694
24	Sikkim	18,187
25	Tamil Nadu	11,79,963
26	Telangana	10,46,822
27	Tripura	64,346
28	Uttar Pradesh	41,57,514
29	Uttarakhand	1,85,272
30	West Bengal	20,17,406
31	A&N Islands	6,660
32	Chandigarh	14,796
33	Daman & Diu	2,196
34	D& N Haveli	3,294
35	Lakshadweep	1,615
36	Puducherry	30,189
	Total	2,68,14,994

1.3 Category wise Number of Persons with Disabilities as per Census: 2011

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

1.4 Registrar General of India has initiated the process for Census, 2021 and they are revising the criteria for capturing the data on all the 21 categories of persons with disabilities included in the RPwD Act, 2016 in Census, 2021. The Department has already given its views to the Registrar General of India in this regard.

1.5 The Department of PwDs deal with the following Legislations governing different aspects of disability, welfare and empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities:

- i. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 (34 of 1992).
- ii. The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 (44 of 1999).
- iii. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (49 of 2016).

1.6 As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD), „persons with disability“ means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others and a “person with benchmark disability” means a person with not less than forty percent of a specified disability, where specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes a person with disability where specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority.

CHAPTER - II

Budgetary Provisions and Utilization

2.1 The Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) for the year 2019-20 are given under Demand No. 93. The detailed Demands for Grants of the Department were laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha on 11th February, 2020.

2.2 The Budget Estimates (BE), Revised Estimates (RE) and the Actual Expenditure (A E) of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (D/oEPwD) for the last four years along with the BEs for the year 2020-21 and AE upto 18.02.2020 were furnished to the Committee. These are given in the following Table:

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure
2016-17	783.56	783.56	772.66
2017-18	855.00	955.00	928.32
2018-19	1070.00	1070.00	1017.56
2019-20	1204.90	1100.00*	669.90 (as on 18.02.2020)

* Reduced by 8.70% at RE vis-a-vis BE for 2019-20.

2.3 The Department has also furnished the following statement showing BE, RE and AE on all the schemes during the years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and BE for the year 2020-21 along with AE till 31.01.2020:

Annexure-I

(₹ in crore)											
Sl. NO.	Name of the Scheme	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20			2020-21
		BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	BE
1	National Institutes	190.02	222.50	222.50	215.00	256.70	256.69	215.00	235.55	162.28	360.00
2	Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase of Fitting Devices (ADIP)	150.00	200.00	200.01	220.00	223.42	216.19	230.00	222.50	149.68	230.00
3	Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)	60.00	60.00	60.00	70.00	70.00	69.98	75.00	105.00	64.78	130.00
4	Rehabilitation Council of India	6.35	6.35	5.71	7.20	5.22	4.72	5.00	5.00	4.66	5.50
5	Schemes Arising out of The Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA)	207.00	257.00	272.23	300.00	258.30	260.82	315.00	260.00	93.76	251.50
6	Incentive to Employers in the Private Sector for Providing Employment to Persons with Disabilities	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	Scheme has been merged in SIPDA Scheme.			
7	National Handicapped Finance & Development Corp. (NHFDC)	32.74	32.74	32.74	38.48	20.75	20.75	41.21	0.92	0.00	0.01
8	Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation(ALIMCO)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	9.58	9.58	60.00	60.00	56.04	50.00

9	Indian Spinal Injury Centre	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	2.60	0.00	4.00
10	National Institute For Inclusive And Universal Design	0.37	0.37	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
11	Establishment of Institute of Sign Language, Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC)	4.50	5.50	4.50	5.00	5.50	4.85	5.00	5.00	2.40	This Institute is merged under NIs.
12	National Fellowship for Persons with Disabilities	24.00	36.41	30.70	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						
13	Post Matric Scholarship to Student with Disabilities	10.00	16.05	14.91	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						
14	Top Class Education for SwDs	5.40	1.00	0.67	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						
15	National Overseas Scholarship for SwDs	2.00	2.00	0.70	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						
16	Support for Establishment/ Modernization of Braille Presses	10.00	10.00	9.11	10.00	10.00	4.68	8.00	3.60	0.00	Scheme is merged under SIPDA Scheme
17	Establishment of College for Deaf in 5 Regions of the Country	3.00	0.70	0.69	3.00	3.00	1.50	3.00	0.00	0.00	Scheme is merged under SIPDA Scheme
18	Establishment of Centre for Disability Sports	2.50	2.50	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	17.00	17.00	0.00	100.00

19	Budgetary Support to National Trust	15.22	17.00	13.42	17.00	20.00	16.23	20.00	20.00	11.00	39.50
20	Setting up of State Spinal Injury Centres	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	2.82	5.00	0.00	0.00	Scheme is merged under SIPDA Scheme
21	Establishment of National Mission, State Missions and District Coordinators	0.01	0.01	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	Establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation	0.01	0.01	0.00	14.05	10.00	0.55	20.00	20.00	17.08	This Institute is merged with NIs.
23	Awareness Generation and Publicity	3.00	3.00	1.74	3.00	2.00	1.15	Scheme has been merged in SIPDA Scheme w.e.f 2019-20.			
24	Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.66	125.43	108.22	125.00	108.67	27.72	125.00
25	In Service Training and Sensitization of key functionaries of Central/State Govts, Local Bodies and other Service Providers	2.00	2.00	1.74	2.00	2.00	1.67	Scheme has been merged in SIPDA Scheme w.e.f 2019-20.			
26	Research on Disability related Technology	1.00	1.00	0.38	1.00	1.00	0.40	Scheme has been merged in SIPDA Scheme w.e.f 2019-20.			
27	Pre-matric Scholarship for SwDs	7.00	10.00	9.07	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						
28	Free Coaching for PwDs	2.00	2.00	0.90	From 2018-19, all six scholarship schemes have been merged into umbrella scholarship i.e. "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities"						

29	National Programmes for Persons with Disabilities	0.01	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	Information and Mass Education Cell	50.00	25.00	16.39	35.00	15.00	14.81	28.00	7.00	3.80	Scheme is merged under SIPDA Scheme
31	Grants -in-aid to National University of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies	35.00	5.00	0.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
	Grand Total	835.23	930.24	908.11	1044.49	1045.00	995.61	1176.23	1072.84	593.20	1295.53

2.4 A perusal of the above table reveals that under various schemes allocated amount allocated even at RE stage could not be spent fully in the last few years. In the light of this underutilization Department, justifying the budgetary allocations for 2020-21, furnished the following reasons to the Committee:

(a) Establishment of Centre for Disability Sports (CDS)

The proposal of setting up of Centre for Disability Sports was under consideration till 2015-16 and the approval to set up first CDS at Guwahati was granted by the Cabinet in February, 2019. Apart from CDS at Gwalior, a proposal to set up such Centre at Shillong is under consideration and the likely cost involved will be ₹200.00 crore.

(b) Budgetary Support to National Trust

The NER component could not be completely utilized due to non-availability of sufficient number of Registered Organizations in North-Eastern Region. The increased budgetary allocation in 2020-21 is due to extending the benefits of the scheme to new beneficiaries and to increase the coverage of the schemes under RCI.

(c) Establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR)

There were Nil actuals from 2015-16 to 2017-18 under NIMHR as the final decision to set up NIMHR at Sehor was taken in October, 2018 and lay-out with other details were under finalization, only meagre amount could be utilized for some preparatory activities during 2018-19.

(d) Grants-in-aid to National University of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies

The project could not make progress because a decision could not be taken whether it would be feasible to convert an existing institution to a National University to cater to various categories of disabilities and the balance of advantage may lie in setting up the University at a greenfield site. But with a

view to maintain an active Head in the Budget line token allocation is required to be ensured each year. Accordingly, token allocation of ₹ 0.01 lakh has been made under this Head for the year 2019-20 onwards.

2.5 The Committee note that in the years 2016-17 and 2018-19, the Budget Estimates and Revised Estimates were same, in 2017-18 the RE was increased by ₹100 crore as against the BE 2017-18 but in financial year 2019-20, the Department was sanctioned a budget allocation of ₹ 1204.90 crore which was revised downward to ₹ 1100.00 crore at RE stage i.e. a cut of 8.70%. The actual expenditure till 18.02.2020 is ₹ 669.90 crore which is around 60.90% of the RE and the remaining 39.10% of RE will be required to be spent by the Department by end of Financial Year i.e. 31.03.2020.

2.6 In this context, the Committee desired to know the reasons for downward revision of budget allocation at RE stage in 2019-20. They asked as to how the Department would be able to spend the remaining 39.10% of RE funds in the fag end of the financial year, which would be against the principles of financial management and prudence. The Department in their written reply have stated as under:

"Although the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities asked for no change in the RE stage of the amount allocated during BE, the Department of Expenditure, after assessing the expenditures of the Department till the first half of the year 2019-20 revised the budget downward. Although as on 18.2.2020 the actual expenditure is ₹ 669.90 which is 60.90% of RE 2019-20, but the low expenditure during the first quarter of the year was due to following reasons:

- a. Imposition of Model Code of Conduct as a result of General Elections due to which the pace of expenditure during the 1st quarter was slow.
- b. During the 2nd quarter of the financial year 2019-20, National Handicapped and Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) reviewed their funds position and has come to the conclusion that no further equity support is required from the Department.
- c. National Action Plan (NAP) for skill training under Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) has been undergoing

- a rigorous overhaul this year to enable streamlining of the process, to check financial irregularities by Empanelled Training Partners (ETPs) and to ensure a robust and secure fund flow mechanism. These initiatives have slowed down the process of release of funds. However, after these checks and balances are incorporated in monitoring the scheme, the scheme is expected to take a firm grounding.
- d. In case of Accessible India Campaign (AIC) and providing Barrier-Free Environment other than AIC, release of funds was hindered due to non-submission of Utilization Certificates of the funds released in previous years to the State/ UT Governments.
 - e. Further, the fund flow under SIPDA and other schemes is demand driven. And due to non-receipt of adequate proposals under some schemes i.e. College for Deaf, setting up of State Spinal Injury Centre and Information and Mass Education (Media), there were lack of desired expenditure during 2019-20. "

2.7 The Department further stated that they are making all-out effort to utilize the entire RE Allocation. As on date, number of proposals are under process in various schemes/non schemes of the Department. However, minor shortfall is expected especially in the North East Region. Department has also forwarded the proposal to Ministry of Finance (MoF) for seeking exemption/relaxation in the last quarter and last month of Financial year 2019-20 with proper reasons.

2.8 On this issue, during the evidence, the Secretary of the Department also deposed before the Committee that for obtaining Utilization Certificates and project proposals from the States specially North Eastern States, they have conducted various meetings and workshops and they are now receiving such proposals which are approved by State Governments. They are also seeking special permission from the Ministry of Finance to extend the period of proposals under some flagship schemes as also special dispensation to relax the ceiling of 25% in the last two months so that the entire RE funds could be utilized by 31st March, 2020.

2.9 During the course of evidence, the Committee pointed out that Department's job should not end with the release of funds. The Department must ensure that the money released is being utilized for the welfare and benefits of PwDs. Addressing the concerns of the Committee, the Secretary of the Department, during the evidence inter alia submitted as :

“.....Aadhar based attendance of teachers and students, installation of CCTV cameras and video conferencing facilities for their training as well as DDRS partners, have been made mandatory. Only the Institutes having these facilities have been empanelled. The money will directly go to the bank accounts of beneficiaries. In order to ensure that the money reaches to Divyangjans, the Department is also trying to evolve a system especially for Skill Training Partners, under which they will be required to upload the details of their activities on their website on daily basis.”

2.10 The Secretary further informed the Committee that in order to speed up the progress of expenditure, the Department has relaxed the mandatory requirement of State Government's Recommendations. The Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment has taken a decision that if the approval of State Government is not received within 60 days, it will be deemed to have been given, if all other criteria have been met and the Centre is found well equipped and suitable.

2.11 It was observed that the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has formulated a multipronged strategy to address the issue of road safety based on Education, Engineering (both of roads and vehicles), Enforcement and Emergency Care. Further, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has constituted a Parliamentary Constituency Committee on Road Safety in each district of the country to promote awareness amongst road users under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha). While referring to this laudable initiative of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways during evidence, members of the Committee were unanimous that such steps could be of immense help for the welfare of PwDs.

2.12 The Committee note that during the year 2019-20, the Department was sanctioned a budget allocation of ₹ 1204.90 crore which was revised downward to ₹ 1100.00 crore at RE stage and the actual expenditure till 18.02.2020 is only ₹ 669.90 crore which is around 60.90% of the RE and the remaining 39.10% of RE funds will be required to spent by the Department by 31.03.2020. The Committee find that the pace of expenditure in the first three quarters of the financial year had been very slow and around 40% of the budget still remains unutilized, resulting in an uneven and inconsistent expenditure pattern by the Department. The Department have attributed this uneven/inconsistent expenditure pattern to the imposition of Election code of conduct in the first quarter, non-requirement of funds by NHFDC in the second quarter, overhaul of skill training under Nation Action Plan (NAP) and the off-repeated factors such as non-receipt of Utilization Certificates (UCs), inadequate proposals from the State Governments and character of the schemes being demand-driven.

The Committee feel that while the Department is seeking special permission to get the ceiling of 25% expenditure in the last quarter relaxed and are quite hopeful, it should not become a regular affair. The Department have hardly taken any new initiatives for timely receipt of Utilisation Certificates (UCs) and proposals and continued with the outdated practice of sending reminders, holding conferences/video conferences etc which have not yielded desired results. The Committee are of the view that when a large chunk of the funds allocation remains unutilized till the fag end of the financial year, the focus automatically shifts towards spending the funds somehow to raise the expenditure figure and this in-turn may lead to hasty and faulty scrutiny of proposals received. Considering these possibilities, the Committee would like the Department to ensure that every release of funds must clearly spell out the time-limit for submitting UCs. In case UCs are not received by that time, the Department must immediately start vigorously pursuing the issue with the State Governments. Since receipt of proper proposals is still an issue, the Committee desire that the Department can do some out-of-the-box thinking and prepare a draft proposal/template for their major schemes to act as a guiding document for

DMs/State officials. Also they should be proactive in seeking the help of local public representatives to identify areas which need their schemes most and to pursue the issue with all concerned State authorities as well.

2.13 The Committee appreciate that the Department have taken a decision to relax the mandatory requirement of State Government Recommendations (SGR) for providing funds to implementing NGO/agency now. According to the said decision, if the approval of State Government is not received within 60 days, it will be deemed to have been given, if all other criteria have been met and the Centre is found well equipped and suitable. However, such a decision puts a huge responsibility on the Department as in such cases they will have to finally decide on the fitness of proposals when State Government's recommendation is absent. The Committee hope that the Department officers are aware of this and are ready to shoulder the responsibility and be accountable for it. They, therefore, expect that this will help the Department in timely approval of Schemes/programmes by the State Governments and also result in a balanced and proper utilization of funds in all the four quarters of a financial year.

2.14 The Committee recall that few years back, Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees on Road Safety were constituted at district level by the Government for better road safety under the chairmanship of MPs. As the local public representatives, MPs/MLAs, are well versed with the ground realities of their constituencies and as their feedback could be of immense use in effective implementation of various welfare schemes for Divyangjan, the Committee feel that the Department of PwDs can also explore setting up such Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees to put to use the experience of the public representatives in design, delivery, monitoring and implementation of welfare schemes for Divyangjan. The Committee are also of the view that the experience of the local public representatives may come in handy in pursuing the issue of timely submission of UCs and proposals from State Governments, especially from North Eastern Region where this Department has not able to bring all governments on board for their schemes, despite prioritising it. Had the

Department brought such issues to the notice of the local public representatives from NE States, such issues could have been resolved obviating the need for surrendering of the funds. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Department to consider setting up such Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees on Welfare of Divyangjan, to help them to design assess, monitor, effectively implement various programmes and thus, utilise the allocated resources fully for the welfare of Divyangjan

CHAPTER - III

Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP)

3.1 The main objective of the Scheme is to provide grants-in-aid to various implementing agencies (National Institutes/Composite Regional Centres/Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)/District Disability Rehabilitation Centres/State Handicapped Development Corporations/other Local Bodies/NGOs) so that they are in a position to assist needy persons with disabilities in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances to promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities. Assistive devices are given to persons with disabilities with the aim of improving their independent functioning, and arresting the extent of disability and occurrence of secondary disability. The aids and appliances supplied under the Scheme must have due certification.

3.2 The Department has furnished the following statement showing BE, RE and AE incurred under ADIP Scheme for the years 2016-17,2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and BE for 2020-21:

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Actual Expenditure
2016-17	130.00	170.00	170.00
2017-18	150.00	200.00	200.01
2018-19	220.00	223.42	216.19
2019-20	230.00	222.50	149.68 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	230.00	-	-

3.3 When the Committee desired to know the reasons for less utilization of Rs.7.00 crore in 2018-19, the Department submitted as under:

"The budget allocation under ADIP Scheme during 2018-19 was ₹ 223.42 crore (Revised Estimates), out of which ₹ 200.42 crore was allocated for ROC (Rest of

Country) and Rs. 23.00 crore allocated for NE region. The details of funds allocated and released is given below:-

(₹ in crore)

	BE	RE	AE	Unspent balance
ROC	197.00	200.42	200.42	Nil
NE region	23.00	23.00	15.77	7.23
Total	220.00	223.42	216.19	7.23

As may be seen from the Table above, though the entire allocation of funds under ROC was fully utilized, however, due to non-receipt of sufficient proposals from NE region, funds earmarked for NE region could not be utilized completely. One of the reasons for under utilization of funds allocated to NE region during 2018-19 was inadequate pace of implementation of cochlear implant program in the region. To overcome the situation and for full utilization of funds during 2019-20, the Department has already issued instructions to the major implementing agencies viz., ALIMCO and National Institutes functioning under the Administrative control of the Department to enhance their activities in Northern Eastern Region. Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Speech & Hearing has also organized National Level Workshop for the North-East on “ Cochlear Implantation and Post Rehabilitation services” on 14th and 15th November, 2019 to create awareness about the need, importance and provisions of cochlear implant program under the ADIP Scheme.

3.4 The funds under the ADIP Scheme are earmarked and utilized for the following activities:

(a) ADIP-SSA Camps

Assistive aids and appliances are distributed to children below 18 years of age and those attending Schools under the Samagra/Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) for which ALIMCO, the implementing agency, is reimbursed 40% of the expenditure by MHRD and

remaining 60% of the expenditure by the Department through Grants under ADIP Scheme.

(b) For Camp activities

Under the Scheme, district-wise disability camps are organized. The State Governments/UTs Administration, while recommending the proposals of Implementing Agencies for organizing camps, needs to focus on coverage of inaccessible and un-served areas. Camps are also organized from time to time as per emerging requirements.

(c) For Headquarter Activity

The National Institutes/CRCs/ALIMCO and well-established NGOs utilizes ADIP grants to extend services to eligible beneficiaries who approach the Institutes or their respective Regional Centers.

(d) Cochlear Implant Surgeries

There is provision of Cochlear Implant for 500 children per year with Hearing disability with a ceiling of ₹ 6.00 lakh per unit under the Scheme. This will result in providing life long relief for hearing impaired children in the age group of 0 to 5 years. Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Speech & Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD), Mumbai, is the nodal agency for providing assistance in the matter.

(e) Distribution of Motorized Tricycle and Wheelchair

Under the provision of ADIP Scheme, Motorized Tricycles and Wheelchairs are provided to severely disabled and for Quadriplegic, persons suffering from Muscular Dystrophy, Stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Hemipeligia and any other person with similar conditions, where either three/four limbs or one half of the body are severely impaired. This will be provided to the persons of age of 16 years and above, once in 10 years. For getting Motorized Tricycles or Wheelchair disability should be 80% and above. The actual coast of ALIMCO's Motorized tricycle is about ₹ 37,000/-. The amount exceeding to ₹ 25,000/- is met by applicant/MPLAD fund/MLALAD Fund/CSR funding.

3.5 During the earlier meetings on the welfare of Divyanagjan, the general opinion of the Committee was that in spite of the claims of Department of PwDs and Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation Ltd. (ALIMCO)'s about streamlining the process of improving and upgrading the quality of various aids and appliances manufactured by ALIMCO, quite often there have been complaints about the quality of aids and appliances distributed to PwDs at ADIP camps. A suggestion was also made by the Committee that in order to enhance the quality of aids and appliances manufactured by ALIMCO, other agencies in the field must also be enlisted to give a healthy competition to ALIMCO to improve quality aspects of aids and appliances.

3.6 Submitting the latest status in this regard, the Department stated as follows:

"ALIMCO has been undertaking a number of measures for improving the quality of its products. Major initiatives include getting certification from BIS for most of its products, engaging „Quality Council of India“ a reputed Govt. of India undertaking for conducting quality assessment of ALIMCO's products, rectifying defects in its aids and appliances promptly and replacing defective aids and appliances quickly in case the warranty period has not expired."

3.7 On the same issue during the evidence, a representative of the Department of PwDs deposing before the Committee stated that the Department is already encouraging NGO like the one manufacturing the 'Jaipur Foot' and providing it grant-in-aid under ADIP Scheme. The ALIMCO and Department have been continuously striving hard to improve the quality of products manufactured by ALIMCO. If it is felt that in spite of all the efforts, Corporation is not able to improve its quality standards, the Department will encourage other agencies. He further informed that some of the National Institutes under administrative control of the Department also manufacture certain types of assistive devices and equipment to ease dependence on ALIMCO. The Department is also encouraging these NI's to distribute their equipments in the ADIP camps organized by them and get feedback from the users on their quality and efficiency.

3.8 In regard to Cochlear Implant Surgeries under ADIP Scheme, the Secretary, Department of PwDs informed the Committee that Defence Research and Development

Organisation (DRDO) has been working on developing the indigenous Cochlear Implant which is presently being imported at the cost of ₹ 6.00 lakh. The Cochlear Implant being developed by DRDO is at clinical trial stage and once it is successful, it will be a major boost to 'Make in India' apart from bringing down the cost to ₹ 1.00 lakh - ₹ 1.50 lakh.

3.9 The Committee note that the Department is holding ADIP Camps to distribute aids and assistive devices to Divyangjan through National Institutes/Composite Regional Centres/ALIMCO. These camps are organized on the recommendations of State Governments/UT administration and the Members of Parliament. The Committee have time and again emphasized that whenever an ADIP camp is organized on the recommendations of other than Members of Parliament, the MP of the concerned constituency must be involved in organizing the camp rather than just inviting them as a guest because they are more aware of the requirements and problems of the PwDs of their constituencies and can identify and benefit the really deserving persons from those areas. As these camps directly benefit the Divyangjan, the Committee are of the view that the camps must be held regularly and as frequently as possible. As per the Department, proposals from North-Eastern States are less forthcoming hence the Committee desire that the Department can take assistance of Members of Parliament from North-Eastern States from this Committee and in general too, apart from sending a model draft of proposals to DMs/State Officials, to get desired number of proposals from North-Eastern States. The steps taken in this regard may be apprised to the Committee at the earliest.

3.10 The Committee note that Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) is the sole implementing agency to supply aids and assistive devices for ADIP camps. In order to maintain and improve the quality of aids and appliances manufactured by ALIMCO, the Committee strongly feel the need for healthy competition which must be infused by enlisting other agencies from this field. Even though, the Department is encouraging National Institutes (NIs) to produce aids and assistive devices but this is not likely to have desired results as each NI is catering to a specific category of disability and will manufacture equipment for that category only. Moreover, as ALIMCO and NIs are under the administrative control of the Department of Empowerment of PwDs, healthy competition in real sense can't be expected. Besides while the Department have tried to argue that Government-produced devices are on no profit - no loss basis, the Committee feel that several social entrepreneurs can be present in the field to

manufacture for Divyangjan under 'Make in India' initiative with reasonable prices. The need is to identify those and extend them the opportunity to produce for general market too. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to consider enlisting other agencies with proven caliber/efficiency in the manufacturing of aids and appliances to give competition to ALIMCO because, if taken with the right perspective, it will not only improve the quality of products but also bring in cost-effectiveness.

3.11 The Committee appreciate that efforts are being made by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to develop indigenous and low cost Cochlear Implant which is presently on clinical trial stage. In Committee's view, a successful launch of indigenous Cochlear Implant will not only bring down the present cost of ₹ 6.00 lakh to ₹ 1.00 - 1.50 lakh and eliminate the dependence on imported devices but also will be a boost for 'Make in India' apart from serving many more hearing impaired persons. The Committee hope that the Department would be prompt in adopting the indigenous product as soon as it is proved to be a better option than the imported device. The Committee would like to be apprised about the progress of this project at action taken stage.

CHAPTER - IV

Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA)

4.1 The grants-in-aid are provided under SIPDA to State Governments, various other bodies set up by the Central and State Governments including Autonomous bodies and Universities to support activities for proper and effective implementation of the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, the Right of PwD Act, 2016) particularly relating to rehabilitation and provision of barrier-free access.

4.2 The BE, RE and AE incurred under SIPDA Scheme for the year 2016-17 to 2019-20 and BE for 2020-21 is as under:-

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure
2016-17	193.00	193.00	110.71
2017-18	207.00	257.00	272.23
2018-19	300.00	258.30	260.82
2019-20	315.00	260.00	93.76 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	251.50	-	-

4.3 On being asked the reason for downsizing the budgetary allocation at RE state the Department in their written replies have submitted as under:-

"Since overall Department's budget has been revised by the Ministry of Finance by downsizing the RE by ₹ 104.90 Crore, SIPDA being an umbrella scheme with ten components had to be downsized by Rs. 55.00 crore.

The progress under one of the major components, namely, "National Action Plan for Skill Training"(NAP) is not as expected due to drastic change in the monitoring of the scheme. Therefore, the overall budget was downsized. NAP

under SIPDA has been undergoing a rigorous overhaul this year to enable streamlining of the process, to check financial irregularities by ETPs and to ensure a robust and secure fund flow mechanism. The period from April-2019 to Dec.2019 was expended in effecting the above process of checks and balances. The period from January-2020 to March 2020 is being dedicated towards fund release".

4.4 The Committee were informed that the Department have merged a number of schemes with SIPDA. On being enquired about the reasons for this merger, the Department replied that EFC in its meeting held on 25.09.2017 has recommended that independent small schemes viz. (a) Awareness Generation Programme; (b) Research and Development; (c) In-Service Training; and (d) Incentive for Private Employer for Employing Persons with Disabilities may be merged under SIPDA scheme. Ministry of Finance (MoF) vide their OM dated 06.08.2019 requested all Ministries/Departments to undertake a self assessment on schemes having similar objectives for being merged.

4.5 The Department have further stated that being the terminal year of the current Finance Commission cycle, all schemes (sub-schemes) would need to be subjected to fresh approval and appraisal process. With the suggestion from the Department of Expenditure, the Department has undertaken a self-assessment of the schemes (sub-schemes) run by it in terms of usefulness and desired outcomes. As such the schemes for Setting up of State Spinal Injury Centres, Support For Establishment/ Modernization / Capacity Augmentation of Braille Presses, Information & Mass Education Cell (Media) and Establishment of College for Deaf are merged in the umbrella scheme of SIPDA from the year 2020-21.

A. Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

4.6. The Committee note that under the Scheme, assistance is provided to State Governments/UTs and autonomous organization/Institutions under Central or State Governments for various activities relating to the Act, particularly for creation of barrier free environment for Persons with Disabilities.

4.7 Under Accessible India Campaign, in Phase I, 1658 identified buildings of 34 States/UTs were to be made accessible, initially by July 2016 but subsequently extended up to March 2020 by Central Advisory Board (CAB), in its meeting held on 19.09.2019. Yearly targets are not fixed since retrofitment and construction is an on-going process dependent on the proactiveness of executing agencies, environmental and topographical challenges and flow of funds. Also, identification and auditing of buildings was a one time activity but funds are released yearly based on the number of cost estimates received from the States/UTs and their correctness.

4.8 On being enquired about the efforts made by the Department to persuade State/UT Governments to speed up their work to retrofit all government buildings in their State/UTs, the Department submitted as under:-

"An MIS portal for online monitoring was launched in September, 2019 with an objective of boarding of all stakeholders of the campaign on a single platform for monitoring the progress being made against each target of AIC and maintaining all the function on digital platform and capture all data on a real-time basis. So far, data for 706 State Govt. Buildings, 99 CPWD buildings and 8 Websites have been uploaded. Letters are sent to all nodal Ministries and States/UTs by Secretary, DEPwD and Joint Secretary for ensuring that the information is updated by 5th of every month duly authenticated by an officer at the level of Joint Secretary and above, latest letter sent in January 2020. Internal data verification results have been communicated to MoHUA/ CPWD for corrective measures at the level of Secretary on 28th January, 2020."

4.9 Furnishing the status of audit of various different accessibility programmes such as Built in Environment accessibility, transportation system accessibility (airports and railways separately) and information and communication system accessibility, the Department submitted as under :-

"Built in Environment Accessibility – Preliminary access audit before beginning of retrofitting work in buildings was conducted by DEPwD in 1662 selected State Govt. buildings through empanelled auditors, following which cost

estimates are prepared and funds released to State/UT Govts. In regards to post retrofitment audit, as per directions given during PRAGATI on 31.07.2019 and HMSJE's review meeting on 19.12.2019, CPWD has to conduct verification audit in Central Govt. buildings after work has been completed to ensure compliance. Also, post retrofitment audit is carried out through Department's officers. Further, students engagement programmes and third party auditors empanelment for conducting post retrofitment audit on primary and detailed levels have been explored, for which Chandigarh College of Architecture was engaged on a pilot basis to conduct verification audits in Chandigarh City. For monitoring work being carried out in Central Govt. buildings by CPWD/MoHUA, review of progress was done at the level of Committee of Secretaries during meeting held on 04.10.2019 and HMSJE during his review meetings on 18.09.2019 and 19.12.2019. Further, data uploaded by CPWD on the MIS portal was internally verified by DEPwD and observations were shared vide Secretary's letter dated 24.01.2020, for necessary corrective measures.

Transportation System Accessibility – Respective Ministries i.e. Railways, Civil Aviation and Road Transport & Highways to conduct Access Audit of their infrastructure and make them Accessible. New Delhi Railway Station and Indira Gandhi International Airport was audited and reports were prepared for circulation and replication in other railway stations and airports, respectively. Also, DEPwD had engaged School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi to conducted verification audit in 70 selected railway stations, findings of which have been shared with Ministry of Railways for compliance.

Information and communication system accessibility – Govt. websites are to be made GIGW compliant and STQC certification is mandated for considering GIGW compliant."

B. Unique Disability ID Project

4.10 The Department is implementing Unique Disability ID Project with a view to creating a National database for Persons with Disabilities and also for the purpose of issuance for Unique Disability Identity Card to each person with Disability. The UDID card will be valid throughout the country, Moreover, the UDID web portal will provide an online platform to verify the authenticity of any disability certificate/UDID card across the country. So far all the State/UTs have started implementing the project and as of now 32.50 lakh e-UDID cards have been generated in 682 districts **(Compendium of Schemes para 4.3.7 and proceeding pg. 36)**

4.11 State/UTs wise details on e-UDID cards generated/issued to PwDs since inception of the projects (year-wise) and the funds released, the Department submitted the statements :

Annexure-I						
Year wise generated/issued UDID cards since inception						
S.No.	States/Uts	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS	0	130	1,381	1,717	3,228
2	ANDHRA PRADESH	0	0	0	349,300	349,300
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	3	94	487	584
4	ASSAM	0	0	0	11,680	11,680
5	BIHAR	0	1	1,464	5,276	6,741
6	CHANDIGARH	0	140	1,713	2,490	4,343
7	CHHATTISGARH	0	44017	69,908	30,734	144,659
8	DADRA AND NAGAR HAVELI	0	0	19	6	25
9	DAMAN AND DIU	0	0	330	412	742
10	DELHI	0	0	14	904	918
11	GOA	0	0	0	78	78
12	GUJARAT	1735	37930	78,363	74,386	192,414
13	HARYANA	0	7392	22,211	5,334	34,937

14	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0	22	2,543	16,449	19,014
15	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	0	0	3,906	14,289	18,195
16	JHARKHAND	0	3812	6,287	4,012	14,111
17	KARNATAKA	0	0	2	123,078	123,080
18	KERALA	0	984	3,159	37,557	41,700
19	LAKSHADWEEP	0	0	0	27	27
20	MADHYA PRADESH	19696	226457	60,341	50,673	357,167
21	MAHARASHTRA	17	17422	58,673	170,438	246,550
22	MANIPUR	0	0	0	737	737
23	MEGHALAYA	0	762	3,066	5,055	8,883
24	MIZORAM	0	276	698	941	1,915
25	NAGALAND	0	0	0	204	204
26	ODISHA	437	85012	117,406	107,381	310,236
27	PUDUCHERRY	0	0	0	1,123	1,123
28	PUNJAB	0	663	22,994	84,439	108,096
29	RAJASTHAN	0	252280	42,555	37,240	332,075
30	SIKKIM	0	16	111	242	369
31	TAMIL NADU	0	22001	15,733	48,383	86,117
32	TELANGANA	0	0	1	477,105	477,106
33	TRIPURA	0	461	701	1,320	2,482
34	UTTAR PRADESH	34	27835	133,063	176,599	337,531
35	UTTARAKHAND	0	0	0	2,332	2,332
36	WEST BENGAL	0	0	4	0	4
Total		21919	727616	646740	1842428	3,238,703

Year wise Fund released to States/UTs under UDID project

S.No.	States/UT's	Fund released (₹ in Lakh)			
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (Till 15/02/2020)
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS	0.00	3.00	6.00	13.00
2	ANDHRA PRADESH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0.00	3.00	31.00	24.72
4	ASSAM	0.00	0.00	0.00	64.75
5	BIHAR	0.00	0.00	0.00	84.75
6	CHANDIGARH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	CHHATTISGARH	0.00	0.00	35.50	24.25
8	DADRA AND NAGAR HAVELI	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
9	DAMAN AND DIU	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.50
10	DELHI	0.00	0.00	7.43	35.90
11	GOA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	GUJARAT	3.75	6.00	38.50	41.10
13	HARYANA	13.00	0.00	22.00	0.00
14	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0.00	0.00	19.58	15.12
15	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	0.00	0.00	25.00	4.00
16	JHARKHAND	0.00	5.66	38.10	27.09
17	KARNATAKA	0.00	0.00	33.00	33.18
18	KERALA	3.50	3.00	24.00	12.50
19	LAKSHADWEEP	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
20	MADHYA PRADESH	19.25	3.75	51.00	0.00
21	MAHARASHTRA	14.00	6.00	43.50	14.32
22	MANIPUR	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.00

23	MEGHALAYA	0.00	14.00	6.00	14.75
24	MIZORAM	0.00	3.00	14.00	12.60
25	NAGALAND	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.25
26	ODISHA	23.00	35.00	3.05	0.00
27	PUDUCHERRY	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
28	PUNJAB	0.00	0.00	28.00	23.65
29	RAJASTHAN	3.25	12.00	26.60	6.00
30	SIKKIM	0.00	3.00	3.90	10.00
31	TAMIL NADU	15.50	54.75	4.65	4.75
32	TELANGANA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
33	TRIPURA	2.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
34	UTTAR PRADESH	26.00	29.75	113.49	0.00
35	UTTARAKHAND	0.00	0.00	0.00	26.50
36	WEST BENGAL	0.00	0.00	23.00	0.00
Total		123.50	181.91	597.29	551.68

4.12. During evidence, the Department submitted as under:

"we started this drive only now. The States had been issuing the certification. So, there is a Legacy Certificate of 1.5 crore in the country which we have taken on board into the Unique Identification Card system. It is an online portal. But States are not revalidating those certificates because of which the person has to go to the CMO again. So, we are asking the States that if they have already given a certificate, they will have to just revalidate it and upload it into the portal. We have given the webcam, computer and the online password, ID etc. to every CMO so that there should not be any delay in uploading the Legacy Certificate. For the newer disabilities, you need a team of doctors for which they may not have doctors, so we have given them permission to empanel privately qualified doctors and also if there are no doctors to borrow from the State, if there is shortage of doctors even in the neighbouring States, the Central Government

can do it on a campaign mode. But they must make an effort to get these children enlisted on to the Unique Identification Card system.

4.13 With regard to the steps taken to persuade the lagging States, the Department in their written replies submitted that to monitor the progress of lagging states, they are taking following steps:-

- (i) Initiated a colour coded daily performance report and indicated level of performance of States/UTs. This report is followed-up daily with the States/UTs /District on calls, Whatsapp Group at Joint Secretary level.
- (ii) The progress of implementation of UDID project is being continuously monitored through regular video conferencing with the State authorities/District authorities and periodic letters to States/UTs at the level of Joint Secretary and Director.

C. Composite Regional Centres (CRCs)

4.14. Presently, Department of Empowerment of PwDs is operating 20 CRCs as extended arms of National Institutes. Basic objectives of CRCs are to provide rehabilitation services to all categories of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), train rehabilitation professionals, workers and functionaries, undertake programmes of education and skill development for PwDs and create awareness among parents and the community regarding needs and rights of PwDs. During the briefing meeting on SIPDA held on 07.01.2020, as representative of the Department informed that out of 20 CRCs, 3 CRCs are yet to start functioning. Still many of the States/UTs do not have any CRC.

4.15 On being enquired about the criteria of selecting the area for setting up of Composite Regional Centre (CRC) the Department stated that for setting up Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (CRC), concerned State Government/UTs are requested to provide land (free of cost) and also temporary built up accommodation to run the CRC till the time of construction of own building. Keeping in view the provision of land and built up accommodation by State Government, decision to set up CRC in respective State/UT is

taken. During the evidence, the Secretary Department of PwDs informed the Committee that they are trying to have one CRC in every State.

D. District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)

4.16 District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs) were started as outreach activity of the Ministry for providing comprehensive services to the PwDs at grassroots level and for facilitating creation of the infrastructure and capacity building at the district level for awareness generation, rehabilitation, and training of rehabilitation professionals.

4.17 The Committee were informed that as of now 325 districts have been identified for setting up of District disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) and out of 325 identified Districts, DDRCs have been set up in 264 districts. The funds have been released only to 92 Districts for the last four years and current year.

4.18 When the Committee desired to know the specific reasons for non functioning of large number of DDRCs set up and the specific measures taken to address them, the Department in their written replies submitted as under:-

- (a) Proposals are not received from implementing agencies after setup due to lack of awareness about the scheme.
- (b) After releasing grants for set up it has take two or three years to completely utilised the funds and even in some cases fund is not utilised completely after four, five years.
- (c) As per pre-revised scheme honorarium of staff was less so DMT/implementing agencies facing difficulty to appoint qualified staff on that honorarium.

The specific measures taken to address such non-functional DDRCs are as under:-

- (a) For spreading awareness about the scheme a national conference was organized in Delhi on 14.09.18, which was attended by around 500 participant including representatives of the DDRCs, State Govt. Officials and District Social Welfare Officers.
- (b) Letters have been written to District Magistrates/Collectors of concerned Districts to send proposal through proper channel and letters have also been written to Chief Ministers of concerned state through Hon^{ble} Minister of SJ&E.

(c) Advertisements in the newspapers for awareness of the scheme.

(d) The DDRC scheme has been revised w.e.f. 1st April, 2018 according to which the cost norms has been increased up to 2.5 times.

E. National Action Plan for Skill Training to PwDs

4.19 The Department has informed that under National Action Plan the number of beneficiaries served in the year 2017-18 are 58210, in 2018-19, the number of beneficiaries came down to 47286 and in 2019-20, against a target of serving 20,000 beneficiaries, only 457 beneficiaries could be served till 31.01.2020 and remaining 19,543 are to be covered in rest of the 3 months of the financial year, which seems to be a difficult task.

4.20 Submitting the reasons for such a dismal performance, the Department stated that NAP under SIPDA has been undergoing a rigorous overhaul this year to enable streamlining of the process, to check financial irregularities by ETPs and to ensure a robust and secure fund flow mechanism. These initiatives have slowed down the process of release of funds; however, after it is affected to a considerable degree of success, the scheme is expected to take a firm grounding. Furthermore, the Department is in the process of developing a dedicated MIS Portal for NAP under SIPDA, which, after development shall make the entire process operationally efficient.

4.21 The Department further informed that they have initiated measures to streamline the process and are making following efforts to provide skills to the PwDs :-

- a) Fund Flow Mechanism changed from release in advance to release after commencement of training and from project wise to batchwise mode to avoid parking of funds with Training Partners
- b) Introduction of centre guidelines including AEBAS, CCTV, VC facility, trained trainers and accessibility as mandatory features at training centres
- c) Validation of Training Centres made mandatory by 3rd party
- d) As part of monitoring mechanism, MIS and Department owned AEBAS are in advanced stage
- e) Surprise inspection of ongoing training by the Department officials

4.22 Submitting further they informed that the Department plan to achieve the target of serving 50,000 beneficiaries within the financial year without compromising upon the quality of service, initially a target of training to 50,000 PwDs was set. However, considering the slow pace of training due to the above mentioned initiatives taken to ensure quality of training, the target was reduced to 20,000. The Department will make efforts to adjust the target reduced for current financial year by increasing the targets gradually in next 4-5 years.

4.23 When the Committee desired to know the number of beneficiaries who got employment after completing training under the 'Skill Development Programme for PwDs, the Department stated that as per scheme guidelines, 3rd installment of grant is linked with placement. The Department has not yet paid 3rd installment in any of the case and is in the process to obtain genuine data from the ETPs.

4.24 As the department claimed that they track the employed beneficiaries for one year and prepare a report thereafter. However when asked during evidence, they were unable to show any report even for 2017-18 and stated that it was 'under preparation'.

4.25 The Committee were informed that three Schemes namely (i) Awareness Generation and Publicity Scheme (AG&PS), (ii) Information and Mass Education Cell and (iii) Scheme of support for establishment/modernization of Braille Presses have been merged with SIPDA w.e.f. 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively.

I. Awareness Generation and Publicity Scheme (AG&PS)

4.26 The scheme launched in September, 2014 was revised in 2015-16 with a view to simplify and enhance its scope, objective, eligibility, etc, to broad base the implementation for better and effective outcomes.

4.27 Components admissible for assistance under the scheme includes setting up of a help line for online counseling of the PwDs; content development; publications and new media; organizing national events; participation in the international initiatives or to support various programmes organized by NGOs or self-help groups; volunteer service/outreach programme for sensitizing commercial establishment and employers; recreation and tourism; participation in community radio; media activities; support awareness campaign for skill development & employment generation for PwDs including job fairs; support spreading awareness about universal accessibility by creating an enabling and barrier-free environment that include accessible buildings, accessible transport, accessible websites and carrying out accessibility audit; promote individual excellence in the field of disability sector, Sporting and abilympics activities to promote talent and skill among PwDs which are to be supported through events, awareness campaign, et.al.

4.28 The resources allocated for the purpose and the actual utilization since 2015-16 is as under:

(₹in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2015-16	5.00	4.00	2.17
2016-17	3.00	3.00	2.70
2017-18	3.00	3.00	1.74
2018-19	3.00	2.00	1.15
2019-20	Scheme has been merged with SIPDA w.e.f. 2019-20.		
2020-21			

4.29 The above data shows that the actual expenditure stood at 54.25%, 90%, 58% and 57.5% of Revised Estimates from 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively.

4.30 Furnishing the reasons for actuals being far lower than REs since 2015-16. D/o EPwD stated as under:

“Grant under AGP scheme is released based on proposals received from various organisations subject to fulfilment of documentary requirement. Due to insufficient and incomplete proposals received from the Non Government Organizations/Government Institutions etc., funds projected could not be utilized fully.”

4.31 Despite under utilization of the allocations, higher amounts were earmarked for the purpose in the subsequent years only to be surrendered large part of REs. In response to the Committee’s query for such lower utilizations and higher allocations, the D/o EPwD submitted as follows :

“Considering the low expenditure in 2015-16 budgetary requirement in subsequent years were reduced from ₹ 5.00 Cr. to 3.00 Cr. Actual expenditure in year 2016-17 was ₹ 2.70 Cr. against allocation of ₹ 3.00 Cr. Further, considering the expenditure of 2016-17, BE for 2017-18 was kept ₹ 3.00 Cr. However, for the year 2018-19 RE amount was reduced to ₹ 2.00 Cr. keeping in view, low expenditure of ₹ 1.74 Cr. in the year 2017-18.”

4.32 Submitting the reasons for this head not being a part of SIPDA earlier and the purpose of having a disjointed and independent scheme for awareness till 2018-19, D/o EPwD replied as under :-

“Initially, the scheme was kept separately, however, based on past experience, specially expenditure trend and considering the facts that it is a very small scheme, it was decided to merge it in umbrella scheme. Decision for merger of the scheme under SIPDA was taken with a view to make the funds allocated against the scheme more flexible for better utilization as per requirement.”

II. Information and Mass Education Cell

4.33 The resource allocation for the purpose since 2015-16 is as follows :

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2015-16	10.00	25.00	7.63
2016-17	70.00	40.00	39.96
2017-18	50.00	25.00	16.39
2018-19	35.00	15.00	14.81
2019-20	28.00	7.00	3.80 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	Scheme has been merged under SIPDA.		

4.34 Provision for fund under media is made by the Department in order to create awareness about the rights and benefits under the Act, Schemes and programmes and to create positive attitudinal and perceptible change among target audience through various activities such as Print Media, Audio-Visual, Outdoor Publicity etc.

4.35 As there was considerable under utilization of the funds under the scheme in 2017-18, the Committee sought the reasons for the same from the Department. The Department in their reply furnished as under :-

“For print Media Advertisement size was reduced from quarter page to 12x20 cms for ADIP Camps. Proposals of all kinds of advertisements, outdoor publicity, print media, electronic media etc. require approval of PMO and certain proposals relating to Print and Audio Visual advertisements planned by the D/o EPwD could not be published for want of PMO approval.”

4.36 On the basis for allocation of ₹ 28 crore for the year 2019-20 vis-à-vis the actuals for the year 2018-19, the Ministry submitted as under :-

“The actual expenditure under 2018-19 was ₹ 14.81 Cr against the RE of ₹ 15 Cr. Whereas various transits and new media plans were not included in 2018-19, so in order to give wide publicity to touch even including the rural sector, a higher level of trajectory projection was planned through different kinds of Media tools e.g. Transit advertising, new media advertising, Live Boards, Kiosks, Digital Unipoles, Display Board, LCD/LED, with a projection of ₹ 28 Crore.”

III. Scheme of support for establishment /modernization of Braille Presses

4.37 As per census 2011, there are 50,33,431 persons of visual impairment in India. The Department of impairment of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) launched the scheme in 2014-15. The main motto of the scheme to facilitate the production of Braille text books for free distribution to children with visual impairments studying in various schools in the country.

4.38 The objective of the scheme is set up new Braille Presses, their modernization and capacity augmentation.

4.39 The resource allocation for extending support for establishing/modernizing Braille Presses since 2015-16 are as follows :-

(₹in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2015-16	4.66	10.65	4.48
2016-17	9.10	9.10	9.09
2017-18	10.00	10.00	9.11
2018-19	10.00	10.00	4.68
2019-20	08.00	3.60	0.00*
2020-21	Scheme has been merged under SIPDA w.e.f. 2020-21.		

*N.B.(upto 31.01.2020)

4.40 With reference to under utilization of provisions during 2017-18, the Department stated that :

“Fund was released for establishing 4 new Braille Presses, Capacity Augmentation of 2 existing Braille Presses and Modernization of 1 existing Braille Press. Further to this, 12 organizations were supported for meeting their recurring expenditure. Though further request for recurring grant in aid was received, these could not be considered for insufficient supporting documents from implementing agencies.”

4.41 With regard to the reasons for incurring less than 50% of the funds allocated at RE stage during 2018-19, the Department submitted as under :-

“There was no proposal received for establishment of new Braille presses during the year 2018-19. In addition to this, the proposals received for recurring expenditure could not be considered for want of supporting documents from implementing agencies.”

4.42 With regard to spike in allocation for the year 2019-20 vis-à-vis the actual of the year 2018-19, the Department submitted as under :-

“By the end of the 2018-19 the scheme had achieved the following targets:

- New Braille Press - 13/18
- Modernization - 12/12
- Capacity Augmentation - 3/3
- Small Braille Press in UTs - 0/3

Hence, the allocation for the year 2019-20 was kept at ₹ 8 crore.”

SIPDA

4.43 BE for SIPDA for the years 2018-19 and 2019-20 at ₹ 300 and ₹ 350 crore respectively was reduced at RE stage to ₹ 258.30 crore and ₹ 260 crore. The Committee note that AE incurred for 2018-19 is slightly higher by ₹ 2.52 crore vis-a-vis RE. However, for the year 2019-20, BE Of ₹ 315 crore was reduced to ₹ 260 crore at RE stage. Shockingly, the AE incurred till 31.01.2020 is ₹ 93.76 i.e. a mere 36 % of RE. The Department has now merged many small schemes under SIPDA after the recommendation of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in September, 2017. In this backdrop, the Committee are of the view that SIPDA, being an umbrella scheme and having merged many schemes in it, should have been allotted more funds instead of a reduced allocation at RE stage in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Committee apprehend that such a reduced allocation indicates that several small schemes, even after merger with SIPDA, probably are not in a position to use the allocated amounts, thereby defeating the very purpose of the merger, for instance schemes like AG&P, establishment of colleges for deaf etc. have not been able to utilise funds completely and have performed poorly in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Hence, the Committee would like to be apprised of the reasons for reduced allocations for 2019-20 as well as their failure to even spend a significant amount of reduced allocation till 31.01.2020. The Committee impress upon the Department to ensure that a scheme like SIPDA, having components of national importance i.e. Accessible India Campaign, Composite Regional Centres, Unique Disability ID project, National Action Plan (NAP) etc. should not suffer for want of funds and be capable of fully utilising the allocated amount.

Accessible India Campaign

4.44 The Committee appreciate the efforts being made by the Department for retrofitting of all Central as well as State Government buildings under the Accessible India Campaign. The Committee have been informed that the Department is making every possible effort to persuade the States/UTs to accomplish the project by launching of MIS portal for online monitoring of the

progress being made against each target of AIC, maintaining of all the functions on digital platform and capture all the data on real time basis. In spite of this, there is not even 50% achievement under this component as out of 1658 buildings, only 805 buildings have been made accessible to Divyangjan. The Committee feel that sincere efforts by the Department are unfortunately not translating into real achievement, except for railway stations where the change is becoming visible. They acknowledge the fact shared by the Department that retrofitment and construction work also depends on the proactiveness of the executing agencies and other challenges. Nonetheless they hope that the new steps initiated by the Department for real time monitoring would be effective and the accessibility problem faced by divyangjan on day to day basis will be addressed expeditiously. The Committee desire to be informed about the progress and expect completion of all 1658 buildings by next Financial Year.

UDID Project

4.45 The Committee are happy that as of now the Department have generated and issued 32.50 lakh Unique Disability Identity (UDID) Cards in 682 districts and started a drive further to speed up the generation of UDID Cards. The Committee also note that 1.5 crore Legacy Certificates have been taken on board in the Unique Identification Cards System, an online Portal. Now States are required to just upload the revalidated Certificate to generate a UDID Card and medical examination will be required only for newer disabilities listed in new RPwD Act, 2016. Even for that, the procedure has been streamlined and norms for constitution of medical teams have been relaxed. However performance of some States is still quite poor, for instance in Manipur, only 737 cards were issued as against grant of ₹ 28 lakh and in West Bengal, a total of 4 cards were issued against ₹ 23 lakh funds. Many States and UTs, like Bihar, Assam, Telangana, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh etc. did not receive any funds till 2018-19. In this connection, the Committee appreciate the Department initiation of a colour coded daily performance report with indicated level of performance of lagging States/UTs and following it up with States/UTs/Districts on daily basis to monitor the progress made by them. The Committee hope that Department will continue

with their efforts to bring all the States and UTs on board and complete the project at the earliest.

Composite Regional Centres (CRCs)

4.46 The Committee find that the Department have set up 20 CRCs to provide rehabilitation services to Divyangjan, train persons, create awareness etc. of which three are yet to start functioning. However a scrutiny of the details given in the Department's latest Annual Report suggests that out of 18 CRCs, 5 CRCs have been given only 1st installment of funds while some have got 3 each. The Department may apprise as to how these CRCs are functional with just one installment. Also out of seven NE states, only Assam and Tripura have CRCs, which would mean that a total of 1,74,389 Divyangjan of the rest five States (as per census 2011) have not been served by any CRC so far. The Committee hence recommend that the Department pay special attention to the remaining NE states in the matter. They further note that of the remaining three CRCs, one in Andaman and Nicobar has been inaugurated recently and the other at Sikkim is likely to start functioning soon. During the evidence, the Department have informed that efforts are being make to have one CRC in each State. While it is a laudable target and ideally should be done, the Committee feel that a small State or UT with lesser population and State/UT with large population cannot be on the same page because of vast difference in their requirements. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to aim realistically for establishing CRCs in consonance with the population of a State.

District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)

4.47 The Committee are dismayed to note that out of 325 districts identified for setting up of DDRCs, only 264 Districts have DDRCs as of now and out of these, only 92 DDRCs are functioning regularly. Initially the Department was attributing the same to lack of awareness of the scheme and shortage of qualified staff due to low rates of honorarium. But, even after revising the Scheme and increasing the cost norms upto 2.5 times, the performance of the scheme has not improved. The Committee are also surprised that the DDRCs of Tripura and Sikkim even do

not have complete address available in the Ministry's Annual Report (Annexure-7). Hence, the Committee desire the officials to personally visit the DDRCs to see their functioning and assess their competence. Overall, the Committee are of the firm view that the scheme needs to be revisited and hence feel that the Department needs to recast the scheme to make it workable.

National Action Plan for Skill Training to PwDs.

4.48 The Committee note that National Action Plan for Skill Training to PwDs under SIPDA was launched by the Department in collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2015 with the objective of training PwDs to enable them to have gainful employment. However, to the Committee's dismay, even after reducing the beneficiary target from 50,000 to 20,000 beneficiaries in February, 2020 for the year 2019-20, the Department could only provide skills to a minuscule 457 beneficiaries in the first three and half quarters of the fiscal as it probably was busy in overhauling the scheme and streamlining the process. The Department is confident of achieving the target in terms of number of trained beneficiaries in the light of MIS Portal being developed by it, in the remaining part of the financial year and even have set an ambitious target of 80,000 beneficiaries in the financial year 2020-21. The Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Department to streamline the process and development of dedicated Management Information System (MIS) portal. However, achieving the revised target this year appears to be difficult. Nonetheless, the Committee would like to urge the Department to strive for it and also strengthen the employability of the beneficiaries after they complete the skill training. The Committee would, further desire the Department to maintain the data of beneficiaries who got employed after getting skill training under the programme and use this data as input for future streamlining of the scheme, if need be.

Awareness Generation and Publicity Scheme (AG&PS)

4.49 From the information submitted on the AG&PS, the Committee observe since 2015-16 (barring 2016-17), the Department could not fully spent allocation

made available even at RE stage. Even simplification and revision of the scheme could not salvage the situation. Despite under utilization of 45% to 50% of the funds allocated during 2015-16, 2017-18 and 2018-19, far higher amounts were allocated in the subsequent years and ultimately the scheme was merged with SIPDA owing to its poor performance. Such resource allocation and spending pattern over the years, the Committee believe, is due to lack of foresight as NGOs/agencies could not send proper proposals, faulty planning, failure to assess capability of NGOs and not taking into consideration the ground realities at the time of allocation itself

The Committee are of the view that for successful implementation of any welfare programme for the benefit of marginalized sections of the society, creation of awareness of the Programmes/Schemes/Projects among the intended beneficiaries the first and foremost requirement. Such awareness creation to a large extent is done through advertising & publicity in mass media - print, electronic and social media. The under utilization of the funds for the last five/ six years, however, shows that awareness generation has not been done through advertising & publicity to the requisite extent.

It has often come to the notice of the Committee that many a time even the public representatives, MPs/MLAs, leave alone the intended beneficiaries, are not made aware of the various programmes/projects/schemes meant for the benefit of Divyangjan. There is a huge demand from Divyangjan for help and support, hence, the Committee are of the view that since AG&PS is now a part of umbrella scheme, i.e. SIPDA, more publicity and awareness campaigns should be held at regular intervals in the relevant areas to make them aware of these schemes/projects/programmes, etc. The Committee accordingly recommend that suitable steps be taken including active support to concerned stakeholders for preparation of viable proposals to ensure full utilization of the resources allocated for the purpose. The Committee hope that merging the AG&P Scheme with Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) will give the desired boost to it. As a first step they recommend that all

the Members of the Committee as well as all DMs should be regularly updated on the ongoing schemes for Divyangjan alongwith contact resource persons in the Ministry.

Information and Mass Education Cell

4.50 The Committee observe that since 2015-16 the Department could not utilize the resources allocated even at RE stage fully. The under utilization is pronounced in 2015-16 and 2017-18 during which utilization was 30% and 65% of respective REs. The allocation for 2019-20 was almost double the actual expenditure incurred in 2018-19 which, however, was reduced by 1/4th at RE stage. Out of ₹ 7 crore RE, 54% only could be utilized till 31.01.2020 leaving the rest 46% for spending in the remaining two months of the financial year. Such large-scale spending of the resources in the last quarter of the financial year, the Committee observe, goes against the relevant rules on expenditure issued by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure).

The Ministry's reply is silent on the Committee's query as to why the increased amount of ₹ 28 crore, allocated for 2019-20 for giving wide publicity even in the rural areas, through different electronic and digital media tools, got reduced to ₹ 7 crore (1/4th of BE). The Committee desire to be apprised whether the Ministry actually assessed the availability of the resources in rural areas since they are of the view that the relevant factors were not taken into consideration while projecting the same for 2019-20 resulting in reduction at RE stage and spending only 54% of the funds till 31.01.2020. They, therefore, recommend that resource allocation may be made in such a way that Department are able to spend the entire amount allocated at least compared to Revised Estimates in the same financial year. The Committee hope that the merger of this Head alongwith AG&PS with Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) will in no way diminish the importance of the scheme.

Establishment /Modernization of Braille Presses

4.51 The Committee note that for want of sufficient/proper documentation from implementing agencies, the Department of Empowerment of PwDs had to surrender large amount of funds allocated even at RE stage in 2017-18 and 2018-19. It is clear that the Department could not address the issue with all the stakeholders when the underutilization of the funds first occurred in 2017-18 due to insufficient documentation. As a result, funds had to be surrendered once again in the following year *i.e* 2018-19 due to same reason. This shows the casual approach of the Department in resolving the basic and mundane procedural issues hampering the fund utilization year after year resulting in delay in establishing more Braille printing presses/ augmentation of the existing Braille presses, etc. The Committee accordingly recommend that suitable steps including regular communication with the stakeholders be taken to ensure full utilization of the allocated resources. The Committee also feel that the fund allocated was fully utilized in 2017-18 and 2018-19, probably the number of new Braille Presses would have gone up. The Committee hope that the merger of this Head with Scheme for Implementation of rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) will in no way reduce its importance and change the given targets for establishing new Braille presses. Also the Committee would desire to be apprised of the total number of Braille textbooks produced by the Braille presses established so far as well as the Statewise number of visually impaired school children who were given these books free of cost.

CHAPTER - V

Scholarship Schemes for Students with Disabilities

5.1 The Committee were informed that the Department have merged all its Scholarship Schemes into an Umbrella Scheme of „Scholarship for Students with Disabilities“ w.e.f. financial year 2018-19. The six Scholarship Schemes being implemented by the Department as one Umbrella Scheme now are as under:

- (i) National Fellowship (For M.Phil./Ph.D. in Indian Universities),
- (ii) Pre-matric (For Class IX & X),
- (iii) Post-matric (For Class XI to Post-graduate degree/diploma),
- (iv) National Overseas Scholarship (For Master's Degree/Ph.D in foreign universities),
- (v) Top Class Education (For Post-graduate degree/diploma in notified institutes of excellence) and
- (vi) Free Coaching (For appearing in competitive examinations for Government jobs and admission to technical and professional courses).

5.2 BE, RE and Actuals of the Scheme for the last three years are given below:

(₹ in Crore)

Year	Budget Allocation	Revised Allocation	Actual Expenditure
2017-18	50.40	67.46	56.95
2018-19	75.66	125.43	108.22
2019-20	125.00	108.67	27.72 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	125.00	-	-

The above statement shows that in Financial Year 2019-20, the BE of ₹125.00 crore allocated under the scheme was reduced to ₹108.67 crore at RE stage. However, the actual expenditure as on 31.01.2020 is abysmally low at ₹27.72 crore which is merely around 25% of RE and 75% of budget is to be spent in the last two months of this fiscal year.

5.3 As per a recent press article '75% of children with disabilities don't attend schools in India. The article stated that a few months back, UNESCO in its report has quoted that "three-fourth of the children with disabilities at the age of 5 years and one-fourth between 5-19 years do not go to any educational institution in India." The Report further states that the number of children enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are fewer girls with disabilities in schools than the boys with disabilities.

5.4 Asked to ascertain veracity of this article, the Department have stated as under:

"The State of the Education Report for India, 2019 released by New Delhi Office of United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation in the year 2019 revealed that as per Census, 2011 about 72% of children with disabilities in the age group of 0-5 years never attended any educational institution. As regards children with disabilities in the age group of 5-19 years, the Report indicates that based on Census, 2011, 61% of such children with disabilities were attending educational institutions. The Report further indicates that a large number of children with disabilities are enrolled at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). A review of the NIOS figures indicates increase in enrolment of children with learning and multiple disabilities, whereas there has been drop in enrolment of students with locomotor and visual disabilities."

Reasons for poor education level amongst PwDs are many. Mostly it may be attributed to following factors:

- Societal prejudice which prevents Children with disabilities from accessing education on equal terms to others

- In many cases, identification of disability is delayed thereby delaying the therapeutic and rehabilitative interventions
- Lack of accessibility, both in terms of physically inaccessible school buildings especially in rural areas.
- Lack of trained teaching staff.

5.5 The Committee were informed by the Department that as per the provisions of new RPwD Act, 2016 following measures have been undertaken:

- (a) The Department has taken initiative to set up Early Intervention Centres at its National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres to support early identification of at-risk cases so as to provide appropriate rehabilitative care-services through therapeutic and other interventions to minimize the severity of disability. Such Centres will also have preparatory schools to enhance the school readiness of Children with Disabilities, which will enhance the enrolment in inclusive schools at later stages. 14 such centres at 7 National Institutes and 7 CRCs will start functioning by the end of this financial year.
- (b) The Rehabilitation Council of India is developing a module for in- service Training of Teachers. Further, M/o HRD is also organising training programmes for their existing teachers to sensitize them about the needs of PwDs in an inclusive set up.

Moreover, the Department invariably consults M/o HRD on relevant matters.

5.6 The Committee observe that the Department have merged their six scholarship schemes into an Umbrella Scheme viz. 'Scholarship for Students with Disability' in 2018-19 with a view to remove the demand-supply imbalance of budget allocation, streamline the implementation process and allow use of surplus funds of one segment in the other one. The Committee welcome the flexibility in use of funds within the segments of the scheme, but they would, at the same time, like to caution that the weaker segment of the Umbrella Scheme should not be left unattended and concerted efforts be made by the Department to strengthen those segments to obviate the recurrence of less demand and surplus funds in the following financial year.

5.7 The Committee note with deep concern that 75% of children with disabilities in the age group of 0-5 years never attend any educational institution, owing to societal prejudice, lack of accessible infrastructure in schools especially in rural areas, lack of trained teaching staff and above all delayed identification of disability. The Committee further note that concerted efforts are being made by the Department under 'Accessible India Campaign (AIC)', opening of early intervention centres and in-service training of existing teachers. They still feel that the Department should undertake a Social Awareness Campaign to bring the desired attitudinal shift towards disabled persons of society in general. The AG&P Scheme of the Department, which hitherto has not performed as expected and has now been part of SIPDA, must be revived with vigour to undertake this gigantic task.

5.8 The Committee appreciate that since Divyang Children must not face any segregation in the school education, the Department, through one of its organisation i.e. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), is developing a module for five day in-service training of existing teachers in all the schools of the country to sensitize them about the needs of PwDs in an inclusive set up. In Committee's view, this is an enormous task and will require complete convergence with the similar efforts/programmes run by the Ministry of Human Resource & Development and other stake holders. There are around 42 lakh schools in the country and many of them are located in remote and difficult terrains.

The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to geo-tag each and every school of the country to ensure that even a single school teacher is not left out the ambit of in-service and training and also that no child is left out of the inclusive school education due to any form of disability. The Committee have also commented on RCI further in the relevant section.

CHAPTER-VI

Rehabilitation Council of India

6.1 The Government has set up Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) through an Act of Parliament for regulating and monitoring the training of rehabilitation professional and personnel, promotion of research and special education and maintenance of Central Rehabilitation Register. Accordingly, the Grant-in-aid is released by the Department of Empowerment of PwDs for the purpose of meeting out the expenditure for Salary and other office expenses by Council.

6.2 The resources allocated for and utilized by Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) since 2015-16 these are as follows :-

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2015-16	4.00	4.00	3.03
2016-17	6.00	6.23	6.23
2017-18	6.35	6.35	5.71
2018-19	7.20	5.22	4.72
2019-20	5.00	5.00	4.66 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	5.50	-	-

6.3 In written reply to query as to why there was under utilization of ₹1 crore (approximately) in 2015-16, the Department stated as follows :-

“During the Year 2015-16, an amount of ₹ 4 Crore was available at BE/RE stage and amount of ₹ 3.65 cr. was released to RCI. While entire amount available for rest of India has been released, un utilization of fund was on account of NE Head. This is because, there are few institutions/organisations in North East region running RCI approved courses.”

6.4 During the year 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 there was under utilization of ₹ 64 lakh, ₹ 50 lakh and ₹ 34 lakh respectively even compared to respective Revised Estimates. Furnishing the reasons for such utilization, the Department stated as under:-

“During the year 2017-18, an amount of ₹ 5.71 crore was released as against available amount of ₹ 6.35 Cr. The under utilization was due to non receipt of appropriate demands from RCI.”

6.5 The Committee note that Rehabilitation Council of India's (RCI) mandate includes regulation and monitoring the training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel, promotion of research and special education and maintenance of Central Rehabilitation Register. The grants-in-aid are released by the Department of Empowerment of PwDs for the purpose of meeting the expenditure for salary and other office expenses by RCI. The utilization pattern of the funds from 2015-16 to 2018-19 (except 2016-17) reveals that funds have not been spent fully even compared to REs. Despite lower actual vis-à-vis REs, higher allocations were made in subsequent years. While furnishing the reasons for under utilization, the Department informed the Committee that the entire amount available for rest of India has since been released and unutilisation of fund was on account of North-Eastern Head for the year 2015-16, as there are fewer institutions/organizations in North-Eastern region running RCI approved courses. The Department further submitted that the reasons for under utilization from 2017-18 to 2019-20 was due to non-receipt of appropriate demands from RCI. The Committee would like to be apprised them as to whether the Department consulted RCI before formally allocating funds to them which, however, after allocation, were surrendered due to non receipt of the proposals from RCI. The Committee are of the view that surrendering of the funds allocated year after year reflects that due care was not taken while formulating the proposals for funds. Non-receipt of proposals from North-Eastern region need to be specifically addressed in view of the substantial population of Divyangjan there. For this region, the Committee recommend that public representatives may be involved to identify areas where RCI can work. The Committee, therefore, recommend that those factors which are likely to result in underutilization may, at least, be identified at RE stage to enable unutilisable funds under this head to be used for other purposes in RCI instead of surrendering. The Committee accordingly suggest to take suitable steps to ensure utilization of allocated funds.

6.6 The Committee in their previous Report on Demands for Grants 2019-20 had also urged the Department to continue the efforts to develop the curriculum in collaboration with Melbourne University to ward off the shortage of trained professionals to provide better rehabilitation services to PwDs. The Committee, therefore, desire the Department to apprise about the progress made so far in this regard along with the year wise expenditure incurred under this activity.

CHAPTER - VII

Budgetary Support to National Trust

7.1 The National Trust is a statutory body constituted by an Act of Parliament namely „The National Trust for the welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999“.

7.2 The objectives of the National Trust includes is to strengthen the facilities to provide support to persons with disability to live within their own families, extend support to registered organizations to provide need based services during period of crisis in the family of persons with disability, deal with problems of persons with disability who do not have family support.

7.3 The activities of the National Trust inter-alia include training, awareness and capacity building programmes and shelter, care giving and empowerment. The National Trust is committed to facilitate equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), covered under the Act.

7.4 The Department of Empowerment of PwDs provides budgetary support to National Trust to run the following schemes for the persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities covered under the National Trust Act:

- a. 03 residential care schemes: Samarth, Gharaunda and Samarth-cum-Gharaunda;
- b. 03 Day Care schemes: Disha, Vikaas and Disha-cum-Vikaas; and
- c. Niramaya: A health Insurance Scheme.

7.5 The data on resources allocated for and utilization by the National Trust since 2015-16 is as follows :

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2015-16	0.98	0.98	0.93
2016-17	5.00	7.00	6.48

2017-18	15.22	17.00	13.42
2018-19	17.00	20.00	16.23
2019-20	20.00	20.00	11.00 (upto 31.01.2020)
2020-21	39.50		

7.6 The Budget allocation for the year 2016 was enhanced by ₹ 2.00 crore approx. at RE stage, however, actual fell short by 25% vis-à-vis RE, the Department furnished the following reasons for under utilization of 1/4th of RE :-

“For the year 2016-17, RE of ₹7.00 was included ₹ 6.30 cr. under General Head and ₹ 0.70 cr. under North East Region (NER) Head. Allocation under General Head was fully utilized but due to non-availability of sufficient number of Registered Organizations in NER, the funds could not be utilized.”

7.7 With specific reasons for under utilization of ₹ 3.58 crore vis-à-vis RE in 2017-18, the Department submitted as follows :-

“During 2017-18, RE of ₹ 17 cr. was included ₹ 13 cr. under General Head and ₹ 4 cr. under NER. Though the entire allocation under General Head was utilized, the NER component could not be completely utilized due non-availability of sufficient number of Registered Organizations in NER.”

7.8 Despite under utilization of ₹ 3.58 crore in 2017-18 higher amount of ₹ 17 crore was allocated for the year 2018-19 which in turn was spiked to ₹ 20 crore at RE state, however, there was under utilization of ₹ 77 lakh compared to RE. The Department, furnishing the reasons for such large scale under utilization of resources allocated even at RE stage replied as under :-

“For the year 2018-19, the RE of ₹ 20 was included ₹ 16 cr. under General Head and ₹ 4 cr. under NER. Though the entire allocation under General Head was utilized, the NER component could not be completely utilized due to non-availability of sufficient number of Registered Organizations in NER.”

7.9 Despite under utilization of ₹ 9 crore upto 31.01.2020 against RE of ₹ 20 crore allocated for the year 2019-20 higher amount of ₹ 39.5 crore was allocated for 2020-2021. Furnishing the basis of such allocations, the Department stated as under :-

“During current financial year i.e. 2019-20, out of total allocation under RE i.e. ₹ 20 cr. an amount of ₹ 11 cr. has already been released to National Trust by the Department and to release the remaining amount of ₹ 09 cr. (including 01 cr. under NE head) is under process. Insofar as the higher allocation of ₹ 39.50 cr. for the year 2020-21 is concerned, with allocation so far the National Trust was not in position to extend the benefits of the schemes for new beneficiaries. With additional funds the National Trust would be able to increase the coverage of schemes.”

7.10 The Committee note that National Trust could utilize the funds allocated under the General Head (meant for all the regions except North-Eastern Region). The funds meant for North-Eastern Region could not be utilized due to non-availability of sufficient number of registered organizations in North-Eastern Region. However, the reply of the Department remained conspicuously silent on the efforts made/ proposed to be made to encourage setting up of such institutions, if need be, in cooperation / consultation with the State Governments concerned. The repeated surrendering of funds for the purpose for the same reason since 2016-17 appears to suggest that the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have not taken proactive measures to utilize the funds.

The Committee are of the view that had the Department made concerted efforts in co-ordination with all the stakeholders including State Governments concerned , NGOs, Community organizations of North-Eastern Region, resulting in setting up of organizations for the welfare of the disabled in North-Eastern Region, surrendering of the much needed funds could not have occurred. The Committee accordingly recommend suitable steps be taken to create awareness programmes in consultation with the State Governments of North-Eastern Region and NGOs/Community organizations of the North-Eastern Region for the same.

NEW DELHI;

**27 February, 2020
08 Phalguna, 1941 (Saka)**

**RAMA DEVI
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment**

MINUTES OF THE TENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2019-20) HELD ON TUESDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 2020

The Committee met from 1430 hrs. to 1700 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, PHA Extension, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Shafiqur Rahman Barq
3. Shri Y. Devendrappa
4. Shri Abdul Khaleque
5. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
6. Dr. Lorho S. Pfoze
7. Shri Prince Raj
8. Smt. Rekha Arun Verma

RAJYA SABHA

9. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
10. Shri P. L. Punia
11. Shri Ramkumar Verma

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda Joint Secretary
2. Shri Srinivasulu Gunda Director

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PWDs)**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Smt. Shakuntala Doley Gamlin	Secretary
2.	Dr. Prabodh Seth	Joint Secretary
3.	Ms. Tarika Roy	Joint Secretary
4.	Shri Kishore Baburao Surwade	DDG
5.	Shri D.R. Sarin	CMD, ALIMCO
6.	Shri Rajan Sehgal	CMD, NHFDC
7.	Shri Nikunja K. Sundaray	JS & CEO (National Trust)
8.	Shri Anuj Bhardwaj	Deputy Director (RCI)
9.	Shri Rakesh Kumar Rao	Deputy CCPD
10.	Shri Sanjay Kant Prasad	Deputy CCPD
11.	Shri K.V.S. Rao	Director
12.	Dr. Himanshu Das	Director, NIEPMD
13.	Shri Vikash Prasad	Director
14.	Shri T.C. Sivakumar	Director
15.	Shri Kshitij Mohan	Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) to the sitting of the Committee convened to have briefing by the representatives of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of PWDs) on Demands for Grants (2020-21) pertaining to their Department.

3. The Chairperson, thereafter, referring to Direction 55(1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha to keep the proceedings of the Committee 'Confidential' till a Report on the subject is presented to the House and asked the Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, to introduce his team and give an overview of the subject matter.

4. The Secretary accordingly briefed the Committee about overall performance of the Ministry, budgetary allocations and actual expenditure incurred/physical targets achieved under various schemes/programmes. The broad issues discussed at the sitting relating to Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Department are as follows:-

- (i) Balanced and proper utilization of funds in all the four quarters of fiscal year.
- (ii) Need to form a Parliamentary Constituency-wise Monitoring Committee on the lines of the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways for involvement of people's representatives in the schemes/programmes implemented by the Department.
- (iii) Organising more ADIP camps for distribution of aids and assistive devices to divyangjans.
- (iv) Training to PwDs regarding proper use of aids and assistive devices distributed under ADIP camps.
- (v) Need to increase number of Empanelled Training Partners (ETP) under National Action Plan to promote employment opportunities for PwDs.
- (vi) Increase in courses conducted to provide rehabilitation services under SIPDA.
- (vii) Role of NGOs under District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs).
- (viii) Proper and continuous monitoring in issuing Disability Certificates to PwDs.
- (ix) Performance of six scholarship schemes merged under one Umbrella Scheme 'Scholarship for Students with Disabilities'.
- (x) Drop in enrolment of three-fourth percentage of children with disabilities at the age of 5 years.
- (xi) Proper coordination of the Department with the Department of School Education and the Ministry of HRD on this issue.
- (xii) Vacant posts in National Institutes, reasons and their latest status.

5. The Secretary also responded to the queries raised by the Members to the extent possible. The Chairperson then directed the Ministry to furnish written replies to all the queries raised by Members for early finalization of the Report.

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

The witnesses then withdrew.

(The Committee then adjourned)

MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON MONDAY, 2nd MARCH, 2020.

The Committee met from 1000 hrs. to 1045 hrs. in Committee Room 'D', Ground Floor, PHA, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Y. Devendrappa
3. Shri Abdul Khaleque
4. Shri Vijay Kumar
5. Shri Akshaibar Lal
6. Shri Lorho S. Pfoze
7. Shri Prince Raj
8. Smt. Supriya Sule
9. Smt. Rekha Arun Verma

RAJYA SABHA

10. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
11. Shri P.L. Punia
12. Shri Ram Kumar Verma

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Srinivasulu Gunda - Director

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

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

(i) *** *** *** ***

(ii) Seventh Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

4. The Chairperson then requested the Members to give their suggestions, if any, on the draft Reports. The Reports were adopted by the Committee without any modifications. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize these draft Reports in the light of consequential changes that might arise out of factual verification of the draft Reports and to present the same to both the Houses.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para	Observations/Recommendations
1	2	3
1.	2.12	<p>The Committee note that during the year 2019-20, the Department was sanctioned a budget allocation of ₹ 1204.90 crore which was revised downward to ₹ 1100.00 crore at RE stage and the actual expenditure till 18.02.2020 is only ₹ 669.90 crore which is around 60.90% of the RE and the remaining 39.10% of RE funds will be required to spent by the Department by 31.03.2020. The Committee find that the pace of expenditure in the first three quarters of the financial year had been very slow and around 40% of the budget still remains unutilized, resulting in an uneven and inconsistent expenditure pattern by the Department. The Department have attributed this uneven/inconsistent expenditure pattern to the imposition of Election code of conduct in the first quarter, non-requirement of funds by NHFDC in the second quarter, overhaul of skill training under Nation Action Plan (NAP) and the off-repeated factors such as non-receipt of Utilization Certificates (UCs), inadequate proposals from the State Governments and character of the schemes being demand-driven.</p> <p>The Committee feel that while the Department is seeking special permission to get the ceiling of 25% expenditure in the last quarter relaxed and are quite hopeful, it should not become a regular affair. The Department have hardly taken any new initiatives for timely receipt of Utilisation Certificates (UCs) and proposals and continued with the outdated practice of sending reminders, holding conferences/video conferences etc which have not yielded desired results. The Committee are of the view that when a large chunk of the funds allocation remains unutilized till the fag end of the financial year, the focus automatically shifts towards spending the funds somehow to raise the expenditure figure and this in-turn may lead to hasty and faulty scrutiny of proposals received. Considering these possibilities, the Committee would like the Department to ensure that every release of funds must clearly spell out the time-limit for submitting UCs. In case UCs are not received by that time, the Department must immediately start vigorously pursuing the issue with the State Governments. Since receipt of proper proposals is still an issue, the Committee desire that the Department can do some out-of-the-box thinking and prepare a draft proposal/template for their major schemes to act as a guiding document for DMs/State officials. Also they should be proactive in seeking the help of local public representatives to</p>

		identify areas which need their schemes most and to pursue the issue with all concerned State authorities as well.
2	2.13	The Committee appreciate that the Department have taken a decision to relax the mandatory requirement of State Government Recommendations (SGR) for providing funds to implementing NGO/agency now. According to the said decision, if the approval of State Government is not received within 60 days, it will be deemed to have been given, if all other criteria have been met and the Centre is found well equipped and suitable. However, such a decision puts a huge responsibility on the Department as in such cases they will have to finally decide on the fitness of proposals when State Government's recommendation is absent. The Committee hope that the Department officers are aware of this and are ready to shoulder the responsibility and be accountable for it. They, therefore, expect that this will help the Department in timely approval of Schemes/programmes by the State Governments and also result in a balanced and proper utilization of funds in all the four quarters of a financial year.
3	2.14	The Committee recall that few years back, Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees on Road Safety were constituted at district level by the Government for better road safety under the chairmanship of MPs. As the local public representatives, MPs/MLAs, are well versed with the ground realities of their constituencies and as their feedback could be of immense use in effective implementation of various welfare schemes for Divyangjan, the Committee feel that the Department of PwDs can also explore setting up such Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees to put to use the experience of the public representatives in design, delivery, monitoring and implementation of welfare schemes for Divyangjan. The Committee are also of the view that the experience of the local public representatives may come in handy in pursuing the issue of timely submission of UCs and proposals from State Governments, especially from North Eastern Region where this Department has not able to bring all governments on board for their schemes, despite prioritising it. Had the Department brought such issues to the notice of the local public representatives from NE States, such issues could have been resolved obviating the need for surrendering of the funds. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Department to consider setting up such Parliamentary Constituency Monitoring Committees on Welfare of Divyangjan, to help them to design assess, monitor, effectively implement various programmes and

		thus, utilise the allocated resources fully for the welfare of Divyangjan
4	3.9	<p>The Committee note that the Department is holding ADIP Camps to distribute aids and assistive devices to Divyangjan through National Institutes/Composite Regional Centres/ALIMCO. These camps are organized on the recommendations of State Governments/UT administration and the Members of Parliament. The Committee have time and again emphasized that whenever an ADIP camp is organized on the recommendations of other than Members of Parliament, the MP of the concerned constituency must be involved in organizing the camp rather than just inviting them as a guest because they are more aware of the requirements and problems of the PwDs of their constituencies and can identify and benefit the really deserving persons from those areas. As these camps directly benefit the Divyangjan, the Committee are of the view that the camps must be held regularly and as frequently as possible. As per the Department, proposals from North-Eastern States are less forthcoming hence the Committee desire that the Department can take assistance of Members of Parliament from North-Eastern States from this Committee and in general too, apart from sending a model draft of proposals to DMs/State Officials, to get desired number of proposals from North-Eastern States. The steps taken in this regard may be apprised to the Committee at the earliest.</p>
5	3.10	<p>The Committee note that Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) is the sole implementing agency to supply aids and assistive devices for ADIP camps. In order to maintain and improve the quality of aids and appliances manufactured by ALIMCO, the Committee strongly feel the need for healthy competition which must be infused by enlisting other agencies from this field. Even though, the Department is encouraging National Institutes (NIs) to produce aids and assistive devices but this is not likely to have desired results as each NI is catering to a specific category of disability and will manufacture equipment for that category only. Moreover, as ALIMCO and NIs are under the administrative control of the Department of Empowerment of PwDs, healthy competition in real sense can't be expected. Besides while the Department have tried to argue that Government-produced devices are on no profit - no loss basis, the Committee feel that several social entrepreneurs can be present in the field to manufacture for Divyangjan under 'Make in India' initiative with reasonable prices. The need is to identify those and extend them the opportunity to</p>

		produce for general market too. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to consider enlisting other agencies with proven caliber/efficiency in the manufacturing of aids and appliances to give competition to ALIMCO because, if taken with the right perspective, it will not only improve the quality of products but also bring in cost-effectiveness.
6	3.11	The Committee appreciate that efforts are being made by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to develop indigenous and low cost Cochlear Implant which is presently on clinical trial stage. In Committee's view, a successful launch of indigenous Cochlear Implant will not only bring down the present cost of ` 6.00 lakh to ` 1.00 - 1.50 lakh and eliminate the dependence on imported devices but also will be a boost for 'Make in India' apart from serving many more hearing impaired persons. The Committee hope that the Department would be prompt in adopting the indigenous product as soon as it is proved to be a better option than the imported device. The Committee would like to be apprised about the progress of this project at action taken stage.
7	4.43	<u>SIPDA</u> BE for SIPDA for the years 2018-19 and 2019-20 at ₹ 300 and ₹ 350 crore respectively was reduced at RE stage to ₹ 258.30 crore and ₹ 260 crore. The Committee note that AE incurred for 2018-19 is slightly higher by ₹ 2.52 crore vis-a-vis RE. However, for the year 2019-20, BE Of ₹ 315 crore was reduced to ₹ 260 crore at RE stage. Shockingly, the AE incurred till 31.01.2020 is ₹ 93.76 i.e. a mere 36 % of RE. The Department has now merged many small schemes under SIPDA after the recommendation of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in September, 2017. In this backdrop, the Committee are of the view that SIPDA, being an umbrella scheme and having merged many schemes in it, should have been allotted more funds instead of a reduced allocation at RE stage in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Committee apprehend that such a reduced allocation indicates that several small schemes, even after merger with SIPDA, probably are not in a position to use the allocated amounts, thereby defeating the very purpose of the merger, for instance schemes like AG&P, establishment of colleges for deaf etc. have not been able to utilise funds completely and have performed poorly in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Hence, the Committee would like to be apprised of the reasons for reduced allocations for 2019-20 as well as their failure to even spend a significant amount of reduced allocation till 31.01.2020 . The Committee impress upon the Department to

		ensure that a scheme like SIPDA, having components of national importance i.e. Accessible India Campaign, Composite Regional Centres, Unique Disability ID project, National Action Plan (NAP) etc. should not suffer for want of funds and be capable of fully utilising the allocated amount.
8	4.44	<p><u>Accessible India Campaign</u></p> <p>The Committee appreciate the efforts being made by the Department for retrofitting of all Central as well as State Government buildings under the Accessible India Campaign. The Committee have been informed that the Department is making every possible effort to persuade the States/UTs to accomplish the project by launching of MIS portal for online monitoring of the progress being made against each target of AIC, maintaining of all the functions on digital platform and capture all the data on real time basis. In spite of this, there is not even 50% achievement under this component as out of 1658 buildings, only 805 buildings have been made accessible to Divyangjan.</p> <p>The Committee feel that sincere efforts by the Department are unfortunately not translating into real achievement, except for railway stations where the change is becoming visible. They acknowledge the fact shared by the Department that retrofitment and construction work also depends on the proactiveness of the executing agencies and other challenges. Nonetheless they hope that the new steps initiated by the Department for real time monitoring would be effective and the accessibility problem faced by divyangjan on day to day basis will be addressed expeditiously. The Committee desire to be informed about the progress and expect completion of all 1658 buildings by next Financial Year.</p>
9	4.45	<p><u>UDID Project</u></p> <p>The Committee are happy that as of now the Department have generated and issued 32.50 lakh Unique Disability Identity (UDID) Cards in 682 districts and started a drive further to speed up the generation of UDID Cards. The Committee also note that 1.5 crore Legacy Certificates have been taken on board in the Unique Identification Cards System, an online Portal. Now States are required to just upload the revalidated Certificate to generate a UDID Card and medical examination will be required only for newer disabilities listed in new RPwD Act, 2016. Even for that, the procedure has been streamlined and norms for constitution of medical teams have been relaxed. However performance of some States is still quite poor, for instance in</p>

		<p>Manipur, only 737 cards were issued as against grant of ₹ 28 lakh and in West Bengal, a total of 4 cards were issued against ₹ 23 lakh funds. Many States and UTs, like Bihar, Assam, Telangana, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh etc. did not receive any funds till 2018-19. In this connection, the Committee appreciate the Department initiation of a colour coded daily performance report with indicated level of performance of lagging States/UTs and following it up with States/UTs/Districts on daily basis to monitor the progress made by them. The Committee hope that Department will continue with their efforts to bring all the States and UTs on board and complete the project at the earliest.</p>
10	4.46	<p><u>Composite Regional Centres (CRCs)</u></p> <p>The Committee find that the Department have set up 20 CRCs to provide rehabilitation services to Divyangjan, train persons, create awareness etc. of which three are yet to start functioning. However a scrutiny of the details given in the Department's latest Annual Report suggests that out of 18 CRCs, 5 CRCs have been given only 1st installment of funds while some have got 3 each. The Department may apprise as to how these CRCs are functional with just one installment. Also out of seven NE states, only Assam and Tripura have CRCs, which would mean that a total of 1,74,389 Divyangjan of the rest five States (as per census 2011) have not been served by any CRC so far. The Committee hence recommend that the Department pay special attention to the remaining NE states in the matter. They further note that of the remaining three CRCs, one in Andaman and Nicobar has been inaugurated recently and the other at Sikkim is likely to start functioning soon. During the evidence, the Department have informed that efforts are being make to have one CRC in each State. While it is a laudable target and ideally should be done, the Committee feel that a small State or UT with lesser population and State/UT with large population cannot be on the same page because of vast difference in their requirements. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to aim realistically for establishing CRCs in consonance with the population of a State.</p>
11	4.47	<p><u>District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)</u></p> <p>The Committee are dismayed to note that out of 325 districts identified for setting up of DDRCs, only 264 Districts have DDRCs as of now and out of these, only 92 DDRCs are functioning regularly. Initially the Department was attributing the same to lack of awareness of the scheme and shortage of qualified staff due to low rates of honorarium. But, even after</p>

		<p>revising the Scheme and increasing the cost norms upto 2.5 times, the performance of the scheme has not improved. The Committee are also surprised that the DDRCs of Tripura and Sikkim even do not have complete address available in the Ministry's Annual Report (Annexure-7). Hence, the Committee desire the officials to personally visit the DDRCs to see their functioning and assess their competence. Overall, the Committee are of the firm view that the scheme needs to be revisited and hence feel that the Department needs to recast the scheme to make it workable.</p>
12	4.48	<p><u>National Action Plan for Skill Training to PwDs.</u> The Committee note that National Action Plan for Skill Training to PwDs under SIPDA was launched by the Department in collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2015 with the objective of training PwDs to enable them to have gainful employment. However, to the Committee's dismay, even after reducing the beneficiary target from 50,000 to 20,000 beneficiaries in February, 2020 for the year 2019-20, the Department could only provide skills to a minuscule 457 beneficiaries in the first three and half quarters of the fiscal as it probably was busy in overhauling the scheme and streamlining the process. The Department is confident of achieving the target in terms of number of trained beneficiaries in the light of MIS Portal being developed by it, in the remaining part of the financial year and even have set an ambitious target of 80,000 beneficiaries in the financial year 2020-21. The Committee appreciate the efforts made by the Department to streamline the process and development of dedicated Management Information System (MIS) portal. However, achieving the revised target this year appears to be difficult. Nonetheless, the Committee would like to urge the Department to strive for it and also strengthen the employability of the beneficiaries after they complete the skill training. The Committee would, further desire the Department to maintain the data of beneficiaries who got employed after getting skill training under the programme and use this data as input for future streamlining of the scheme, if need be.</p>
13	4.49	<p><u>Awareness Generation and Publicity Scheme (AG&PS)</u> From the information submitted on the AG&PS, the Committee observe since 2015-16 (barring 2016-17), the Department could not fully spent allocation made available even at RE stage. Even simplification and revision of the scheme could not salvage the situation. Despite under utilization of 45% to 50% of the funds</p>

		<p>allocated during 2015-16, 2017-18 and 2018-19, far higher amounts were allocated in the subsequent years and ultimately the scheme was merged with SIPDA owing to its poor performance. Such resource allocation and spending pattern over the years, the Committee believe, is due to lack of foresight as NGOs/agencies could not send proper proposals, faulty planning, failure to assess capability of NGOs and not taking into consideration the ground realities at the time of allocation itself</p> <p>The Committee are of the view that for successful implementation of any welfare programme for the benefit of marginalized sections of the society, creation of awareness of the Programmes/Schemes/Projects among the intended beneficiaries the first and foremost requirement. Such awareness creation to a large extent is done through advertising & publicity in mass media - print, electronic and social media. The under utilization of the funds for the last five/ six years, however, shows that awareness generation has not been done through advertising & publicity to the requisite extent.</p> <p>It has often come to the notice of the Committee that many a time even the public representatives, MPs/MLAs, leave alone the intended beneficiaries, are not made aware of the various programmes/projects/schemes meant for the benefit of Divyangjan. There is a huge demand from Divyangjan for help and support, hence, the Committee are of the view that since AG&PS is now a part of umbrella scheme, i.e. SIPDA, more publicity and awareness campaigns should be held at regular intervals in the relevant areas to make them aware of these schemes/projects/programmes, etc. The Committee accordingly recommend that suitable steps be taken including active support to concerned stakeholders for preparation of viable proposals to ensure full utilization of the resources allocated for the purpose. The Committee hope that merging the AG&P Scheme with Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) will give the desired boost to it. As a first step they recommend that all the Members of the Committee as well as all DMs should be regularly updated on the ongoing schemes for Divyangjan alongwith contact resource persons in the Ministry.</p>
14	4.50	<p><u>Information and Mass Education Cell</u> The Committee observe that since 2015-16 the Department could not utilize the resources allocated even at RE stage fully. The under utilization is pronounced in 2015-16 and 2017-18 during which utilization was 30% and 65% of respective REs. The allocation for 2019-20 was almost double the actual expenditure incurred in 2018-19 which, however, was reduced by 1/4th at RE stage. Out of ₹ 7 crore RE, 54% only could be utilized till</p>

	<p>31.01.2020 leaving the rest 46% for spending in the remaining two months of the financial year. Such large-scale spending of the resources in the last quarter of the financial year, the Committee observe, goes against the relevant rules on expenditure issued by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure).</p> <p>The Ministry's reply is silent on the Committee's query as to why the increased amount of ₹ 28 crore, allocated for 2019-20 for giving wide publicity even in the rural areas, through different electronic and digital media tools, got reduced to ₹ 7 crore (1/4th of BE). The Committee desire to be apprised whether the Ministry actually assessed the availability of the resources in rural areas since they are of the view that the relevant factors were not taken into consideration while projecting the same for 2019-20 resulting in reduction at RE stage and spending only 54% of the funds till 31.01.2020. They, therefore, recommend that resource allocation may be made in such a way that Department are able to spend the entire amount allocated at least compared to Revised Estimates in the same financial year. The Committee hope that the merger of this Head alongwith AG&PS with Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) will in no way diminish the importance of the scheme.</p>
15	<p>Establishment /Modernization of Braille Presses</p> <p>The Committee note that for want of sufficient/proper documentation from implementing agencies, the Department of Empowerment of PwDs had to surrender large amount of funds allocated even at RE stage in 2017-18 and 2018-19. It is clear that the Department could not address the issue with all the stakeholders when the underutilization of the funds first occurred in 2017-18 due to insufficient documentation. As a result, funds had to be surrendered once again in the following year i.e 2018-19 due to same reason. This shows the casual approach of the Department in resolving the basic and mundane procedural issues hampering the fund utilization year after year resulting in delay in establishing more Braille printing presses/ augmentation of the existing Braille presses, etc. The Committee accordingly recommend that suitable steps including regular communication with the stakeholders be taken to ensure full utilization of the allocated resources. The Committee also feel that the fund allocated was fully utilized in 2017-18 and 2018-19, probably the number of new Braille Presses would have gone up. The Committee hope that the merger of this Head with Scheme for Implementation of rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) will in no way reduce its importance and change the</p>

		<p>given targets for establishing new Braille presses. Also the Committee would desire to be apprised of the total number of Braille textbooks produced by the Braille presses established so far as well as the Statewise number of visually impaired school children who were given these books free of cost.</p>
16	5.6	<p>The Committee observe that the Department have merged their six scholarship schemes into an Umbrella Scheme viz. 'Scholarship for Students with Disability' in 2018-19 with a view to remove the demand-supply imbalance of budget allocation, streamline the implementation process and allow use of surplus funds of one segment in the other one. The Committee welcome the flexibility in use of funds within the segments of the scheme, but they would, at the same time, like to caution that the weaker segment of the Umbrella Scheme should not be left unattended and concerted efforts be made by the Department to strengthen those segments to obviate the recurrence of less demand and surplus funds in the following financial year.</p>
17	5.7	<p>The Committee note with deep concern that 75% of children with disabilities in the age group of 0-5 years never attend any educational institution, owing to societal prejudice, lack of accessible infrastructure in schools especially in rural areas, lack of trained teaching staff and above all delayed identification of disability. The Committee further note that concerted efforts are being made by the Department under 'Accessible India Campaign (AIC)', opening of early intervention centres and in-service training of existing teachers. They still feel that the Department should undertake a Social Awareness Campaign to bring the desired attitudinal shift towards disabled persons of society in general. The AG&P Scheme of the Department, which hitherto has not performed as expected and has now been part of SIPDA, must be revived with vigour to undertake this gigantic task.</p>
18	5.8	<p>The Committee appreciate that since Divyang Children must not face any segregation in the school education, the Department, through one of its organisation i.e. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), is developing a module for five day in-service training of existing teachers in all the schools of the country to sensitize them about the needs of PwDs in an inclusive set up. In Committee's view, this is an enormous task and will require complete convergence with the similar efforts/programmes run by the Ministry of Human Resource & Development and other stake holders. There are around 42 lakh schools in the country</p>

		<p>and many of them are located in remote and difficult terrains. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department to geo-tag each and every school of the country to ensure that even a single school teacher is not left out the ambit of in-service and training and also that no child is left out of the inclusive school education due to any form of disability. The Committee have also commented on RCI further in the relevant section.</p>
19	6.5	<p>The Committee note that Rehabilitation Council of India's (RCI) mandate includes regulation and monitoring the training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel, promotion of research and special education and maintenance of Central Rehabilitation Register. The grants-in-aid are released by the Department of Empowerment of PwDs for the purpose of meeting the expenditure for salary and other office expenses by RCI. The utilization pattern of the funds from 2015-16 to 2018-19 (except 2016-17) reveals that funds have not been spent fully even compared to REs. Despite lower actual vis-à-vis REs, higher allocations were made in subsequent years. While furnishing the reasons for under utilization, the Department informed the Committee that the entire amount available for rest of India has since been released and unutilisation of fund was on account of North-Eastern Head for the year 2015-16, as there are fewer institutions/organizations in North-Eastern region running RCI approved courses. The Department further submitted that the reasons for under utilization from 2017-18 to 2019-20 was due to non-receipt of appropriate demands from RCI. The Committee would like to be apprised them as to whether the Department consulted RCI before formally allocating funds to them which, however, after allocation, were surrendered due to non receipt of the proposals from RCI. The Committee are of the view that surrendering of the funds allocated year after year reflects that due care was not taken while formulating the proposals for funds. Non-receipt of proposals from North-Eastern region need to be specifically addressed in view of the substantial population of Divyangjan there. For this region, the Committee recommend that public representatives may be involved to identify areas where RCI can work. The Committee, therefore, recommend that those factors which are likely to result in underutilization may, at least, be identified at RE stage to enable unutilisable funds under this head to be used for other purposes in RCI instead of surrendering. The Committee accordingly suggest to take suitable steps to ensure utilization of allocated funds.</p>

20	6.6	<p>The Committee in their previous Report on Demands for Grants 2019-20 had also urged the Department to continue the efforts to develop the curriculum in collaboration with Melbourne University to ward off the shortage of trained professionals to provide better rehabilitation services to PwDs. The Committee, therefore, desire the Department to apprise about the progress made so far in this regard along with the year wise expenditure incurred under this activity.</p>
21	7.10	<p>The Committee note that National Trust could utilize the funds allocated under the General Head (meant for all the regions except North-Eastern Region). The funds meant for North-Eastern Region could not be utilized due to non-availability of sufficient number of registered organizations in North-Eastern Region. However, the reply of the Department remained conspicuously silent on the efforts made/ proposed to be made to encourage setting up of such institutions, if need be, in cooperation / consultation with the State Governments concerned. The repeated surrendering of funds for the purpose for the same reason since 2016-17 appears to suggest that the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have not taken proactive measures to utilize the funds.</p> <p>The Committee are of the view that had the Department made concerted efforts in co-ordination with all the stakeholders including State Governments concerned , NGOs, Community organizations of North-Eastern Region, resulting in setting up of organizations for the welfare of the disabled in North-Eastern Region, surrendering of the much needed funds could not have occurred. The Committee accordingly recommend suitable steps be taken to create awareness programmes in consultation with the State Governments of North-Eastern Region and NGOs/Community organizations of the North-Eastern Region for the same.</p>