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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT (2022-23)**

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

THIRTY-NINTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2022/ Agrahayana, 1944 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 12.12.2022

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 12.12.2022



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2022/ Agrahayana, 1944 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2022-23)**

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS
Lok Sabha

2. Shri Deepak (Dev) Adhikari
3. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
4. Shri Bholanath (B.P. Saroj)
5. Smt. Pramila Bisoyi
6. Shri Thomas Chazhikadan
7. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
8. Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
9. Shri Hans Raj Hans
10. Shri Abdul Khaleque
11. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
12. Smt. Geeta Kora
13. Shri Vijay Kumar
14. Shri Akshaibar Lal
15. Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann
16. Shri V. Sreenivasa Prasad
17. Smt. Supriya Sadanand Sule
18. Shri K. Shanmuga Sundaram
19. Smt. Rekha Arun Verma
20. Shri Devendrappa Y.
21. Shri Tokheho Yephthomi

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Sumitra Balmik
23. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
24. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
25. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
26. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
27. Shri Naryana Koragappa
28. Smt. Mamata Mohanta
29. Shri Ramji
30. Shri Anthiyur P. Selvarasu
31. Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Ved Prakash Nauriyal - Joint Secretary
3. Smt. Mamta Kemwal - Director
4. Shri Krishendra Kumar - Deputy Secretary
5. Smt. Banani Sarker Joshi - Under Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2022-23) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Thirty-Ninth Report on the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-Second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

2. The Thirty-second Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 24th March, 2022. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) have furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 23rd August, 2022. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 9.12.2022.

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

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

NEW DELHI;

09 December, 2022
18 Agrahayana, 1944 (Saka)

RAMA DEVI
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

CHAPTER - I

REPORT

The Report deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Thirty-Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment).

2. The Thirty-Second Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 24.03.2022. It contained 15 observations/recommendations. Action Taken Replies of Government in respect of all the observations/recommendations have been examined and are categorized as under: -

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: **(Total: 06, Chapter: II)**
Rec. Para No. 2.9, 2.11, 3.19, 4.15, 6.9 & 7.17
- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply: - **(Total: 05, Chapter: III)**
Rec. Para No. 2.10, 3.17, 3.20, 4.14 & 7.16.
- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration: - **(Total: 02, Chapter: IV)**
Rec. Para No. 3.18 & 5.8.
- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature: - **(Total: 02, Chapter: V)**
Rec. Para No. 4.13 & 7.18

3. The Committee desire that action taken notes on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in

respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than three months of the presentation of this Report.

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

Recommendation (Para No.3.18)

5. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Committee find that the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC) which scheme came into existence in 1999-2000 and is being funded under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme since 2020-21 has still not come up to the expectations as only 55-60 DDRCs have been made functional out of DDRCs set up in 269 Districts. The Committee understand that the matter gets discussed in the meetings of the Central Advisory Board on Disability, in the presence of State Government functionaries too, yet the pace with which the work has progressed is discouraging. Apparently, the present cost norms are not sufficient to get qualified rehabilitation professionals and there is a particular scarcity of professionals in remote areas. The Committee observe that the Department has delayed taking concrete action to tackle this issue although the initiatives taken by the Department now by revising the guidelines and preparation of model DDRCs would hopefully sort out the deficiencies experienced in setting up DDRCs. The Committee expect DDRCs would be made functional in all 269 Districts. The Committee would like to be apprised of the current status and measures being taken to achieve the targets”.

6. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“Current status and measures being taken to achieve the target under DDRC are as under:-

- ❖ Number of disabilities covered has been increased from 7 to 21 in 2018 after enforcement of RPwD Act 2016.
- ❖ According to revised guidelines which are likely to be implemented from 2022-23, DDRCs should preferably be located in close proximity to District Hospital/District early intervention centers.
- ❖ Quality Professionals can now be appointed on consultation basis (part time) or full time. This will assist enhancing availability of professionals as per requirements within the grants constraints. Ministry is in the process of preparing model DDRCs features for assisting states/UTs in setting up and running DDRCs effectively.
- ❖ Hon’ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has communicated to all States/UTs to send the proposal for setting up of DDRCs in districts of respective states”.

7. The Committee have been stressing on the need to accelerate the pace by the Department in setting up of DDRCs in all 269 designated districts in the country, as only 55-60 District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) are functional till now. The Committee had hoped that with the revision of the guidelines of the DDRS, the inherent deficiencies of the scheme would get corrected and the path for setting up of DDRCs would be cleared. However, the concern expressed by the Committee is not likely to get addressed even now after the revision of guidelines, as the Department in their latest replies, has still not provided the current status of DDRCs. The Committee are unable to understand as to how the Department would process the proposals received from States/ UTs unless the guidelines are implemented. The submission of the Department that they are in the process of preparing model DDRCs features that would assist States/ UTs in setting up and running DDRCs effectively again has set no timelines for preparation of Model DDRCs features. From this, the Committee strongly feel that the Department is somewhat casual to

complete the task in hand. The Committee also have a strong doubt for the early implementation of revised guidelines. The Committee, therefore, would like the Department to lay down a proper roadmap with timelines for execution of work to ensure that the DDRCs are established in every district of the Country to achieve its objectives.

Recommendation (Para No.4.13)

8. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“With regard to the schemes meant for educational empowerment of Divyangjan, the Committee are perturbed to note that the budgetary allocation under six schemes of scholarships/fellowship for students with disabilities has not only remained stagnant but also the target fixed under each of these schemes have not been achieved due to insufficient applications received from various State Governments/UTs owing to Covid-19 pandemic. As the Ministry had informed, funds could not be released by them as verified applications were received towards the end of Financial Year/in the beginning of next Financial Year. Since the funds could not be released in previous year due to late receipt of applications, it was conveniently assumed that the same scenario would continue next year and similar budgetary allocation as well as targets were fixed for succeeding year which is evident from the fact that since 2019-20 till date, 200 National fellowships, 1700 Post-Matric scholarships, 300 Top Class Education, 2000 free coaching, 20 National Overseas scholarships and 25000 pre-matric scholarships are the targets fixed every year with not change. It is another matter that except the National Fellowship Scheme, no other targets were achieved. The Committee believe that the Department needs to work sincerely and find out the means to obviate such instances. The Committee also feel that there is lack of coordination between the Department and the State/UT Governments as a result of which timely action is not initiated and students are made to suffer. They would like Department to take appropriate measures so that disabled students are not deprived of the

Scholarship schemes of the Department. As the Committee were informed that sufficient applications in SC, ST category and from North East Region were not received, the Department should take effective steps to disseminate the awareness about these Scholarship Schemes among disabled students belonging to these categories and North-East States so that they can also get the benefit of these Schemes”.

9. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“The target fixed under the Scholarship Schemes except Free Coaching have largely been achieved in 2021-22, due to relentless efforts by the Department to create awareness through advertisement in Print Electronics/Social media along with regular VCs with representatives of States/UTs Administrations. Details of the applications finally verified and scholarship released under the Schemes on boarded on NSP in 2021-22 are given in the Table-I below:-

Table-I

S.No.	Name of the Scheme	Slots	Applications finally verified	Applications verified for payment by NSP	Applications for finally paid as on date
1	Pre matric	25000	21052	19327	16000
2	Post matric	17000	25305	16658	16493
3	Top Class	300	435	294	292

While appraising the scheme Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), restricted the overall outlay under the Scholarship Scheme upto ₹560.00 crore for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Accordingly, the outlay for 2021-22 was revised from ₹125.00 crore to ₹110.00 crore. Similarly, the budget allocation for 2022-23 has been allocated for ₹105.00 crore.

Department had received sufficient number of applications under SC and ST category, as is evident from the Table-II below that funds under these two categories were fully utilized/released to the beneficiaries. As regards, NER, Department will increase the awareness measures and will ensure enhanced propagation of the Schemes in NER through all possible mediums of advertisement:-

Table-II
(in crore)

S.No.	Head	Funds Allocated		Funds Released
		BE	RE	
1	SC	10.87	14.75	14.87
2	ST	3.27	3.27	3.27

Since, EFC has fixed the outlay ceiling for the five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26, it will not be possible for the Department to increase the targets viz a viz the allocation. However, the observation of the Committee has been noted for compliance and efforts will be made to fully utilize the slots out of the allocated budget under the scheme and to the Department.

Insofar as coordination is concerned, officers of the Department are in regular touch with functionaries of the Social Welfare Department through telephone, WhatsApp Group and issues warranting action are immediately brought to the notice of the Nodal Officers of States/UTs in these forums for quick redressal”.

10. The Committee note from the action taken reply furnished by the Department that against the allocated slots of 25,000 for pre-matric Scholarship, only 16,000 applicants were finally paid scholarships in 2021-22. The situation is though better in case of Post Matric and Top Class, but in these Schemes also, the number of applicants finally paid was less against the allocated slots. Therefore, the Committee are not

convinced by the submission made by the Department that the target fixed were achieved and feel that more sincere efforts such as time bound disposal of applications, wider publicity, etc are needed to achieve the targets. The Committee further have been informed about the directions of the EFC wherein the outlay ceiling for the five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 has been fixed due to which it will not be possible for the Department to increase the targets *vis-a-vis* the allocation. The Committee are of the opinion that with the steady increase in population, it would not be in the interest of the deprived sections of the society to fix the total outlay as it would restrict the number of persons who can avail this facility. The Committee would therefore, like the Department to bring it to the notice of the concerned Department so that such restrictions are relaxed in respect of such Schemes.

Recommendation (Para No.5.8)

11. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Committee are surprised to find that out of the five Centres for disabilities Sports in five zones of the Country proposed to be set up in consequent upon the Budget announcement of 2014-15, only 2 Centres *viz* Gwalior and Shillong may finally be set up as the Centre for disability sports at Gwalior is likely to be completed by June, 2022 and the financial allocation for the Centre at Shillong has been made. The Committee are unable to understand the reasons for the failure of the Department in fructifying the vision of the Government announced in Budget Speech of 2014-15, even after a period of more than six years has passed particularly in the circumstances where no dedicated sports training facilities for Divyangjan existed in the Department of DePWD. The Committee are apprehensive about the time the Centre at Gwalior would consume to start functioning as only the work is expected to be completed by June, 2022. The Committee would therefore, like the

Department to make the Centre at Gwalior functional immediately after the construction work is completed and necessary action may be initiated in this regard right now. The Committee, with regard to Centre at Shillong would like to advise that a time bound approach may be adopted by the Department for early completion of work and the proposal with regard to remaining Centres may be initiated for consideration of the competent authority. The issue needs focused attention now that so many of Divyang sportspersons have given excellent performances and won medals for the country in Special Olympics and other international sports events. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of work with regard to remaining proposed Centres”.

12. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“As regards the ongoing work of the Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior, regular review/follow-up is being done with the CPWD as the executing agency for expeditious completion of the work. Further, as of now, only one Centre for Disability Sports being set up at Gwalior has been approved. The work in respect of other such Centre would be taken up only after the approval of Competent Authority”.

13. In their earlier recommendation, the Committee had expressed disappointment over the fact that even after the lapse of more than six years, no dedicated sports training facilities for Divyangjan have been made fully functional by the Department of DEPwD. While the Committee was anticipating that the centre at Gwalior would finally see fruition, yet from the action taken replies, it appears that the project is yet again delayed. Moreover, as informed by the Department construction of no other sports training facility for PwDs is in consideration at the moment. The Committee deplore the present situation, especially since the Finance Minister has made an announcement of establishing 5 such centres in the Budget speech of 2014-15. The Committee, therefore, once

again impress upon the Department to leverage their monitoring and execution mechanism so as to ensure that the centre at Gwalior is completed expeditiously. The Committee desire that recommendation be pursued earnestly and with a sense of urgency especially now when performance of Divyangjan sportspersons of India at the international levels is comparable to the best of the world and development of such facilities will go a long way to nurture talent of such upcoming sportspersons.

Recommendation (Para No.7.18)

14. The Committee, in their original Report, had recommended as follows:-

“The Committee are perturbed to note that the Ministry of Rural Development provides disability pension @₹300/- per month per persons with disabilities aged 18-79 years and ₹ 500 for the persons aged 80 years and above with severe and multiple disabilities and belonging to the below the poverty line category as per the criteria prescribed by the Central Government under Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme of NSAP. The States/UTs are also topping up on central assistance but with a meager amount. The Committee had earlier made a recommendation for enhancement of Central assistance towards disability pension. Since, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is the nodal Department for the overall welfare of disabled persons, the Committee desire that the Department should take up this matter again with the Ministry of Rural Development and pursue the matter for enhancing central assistance towards disability pension from ₹300 to reasonable amount with the provision for periodic revision so that the poor and needy disabled persons get a decent amount of pension to fulfill their basic needs”.

15. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted as under:-

“Ministry of Rural Development has been requested at the level of Secretary, DEPwD to enhance quantum of central assistance towards disability pension being provided under their Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme vide letter dated 23.02.2022. The matter is being followed up with them”.

16. The Committee appreciate that the Department is undertaking efforts at the highest level to enhance the quantum of Central Assistance towards disability pensions. At the same time, the Committee would like to call attention to the absurdity of granting a meagre pension amounting to only ₹300, which given the current state of inflation, appears farcical. Hence, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation and exhort the Department to renew their efforts earnestly so that the pension amount can be raised to a reasonable level and be of actual use to the beneficiaries.

CHAPTER-II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation Para No. 2.9)

From the in-depth examination of the last 3 years' Demands for Grants of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, the Committee find that BE of the Department was invariably reduced at the stage of Revised Estimate during 2019-20 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the Department could not utilize even reduced allocation fully. The Committee note that the Department could spend 92.38% and 95.73% of the revised allocation during the year 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively as the Organizations/Institutions supported under the Schemes were constrained in demand for funds during these years. The Committee are perturbed to note that in the year 2021-22, the Department was able to spend only ₹539.00 crore out of ₹1,044.31 crore upto 25.01.2022 due to low utilization of allocated funds reason being the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic due to which proposals were received with incomplete documents or not as per the prescribed Scheme guidelines. Nonetheless, the Committee were assured by the representatives of the Department during the evidence before the Committee that the remaining funds would be fully utilized by 31.03.2022. The Committee are not satisfied with the stereotyped reply of the Department as more than ₹500 crore remained to be utilized between 26.01.2022 and 31.3.2022. The Committee were also assured by them, during the time of examination of DFG for 2020-2021 that the entire allocated of Budget i.e. ₹900 crore would be utilized by the end of March 2021, but the Department could ultimately spend ₹861.63 crore in 2020-21. The Committee, to some extent, do understand slow implementation of Schemes due to Covid 19 pandemic, but on the other hand living with Covid-19 is the new normal now and new variants would continue to come, as predicted by the scientists worldwide. The Department is expected to find out innovative ways to function for effective implementation of various Schemes so that every single penny of the allocated Budget can be utilized. The Committee believe that had the Department taken appropriate steps and formulated modalities to reach to the beneficiaries and capacity building of implementing agencies during the time of the pandemic, a major chunk of funds allocated in the year 2021-22 would have been utilized till 25.01.2022. The Committee desire that the sincere efforts should be taken by the Department to find smart solutions and utilize remaining funds allocated in 2021-22.

Reply of the Government

As against the RE of Rs. 1044.31 crore, the department had spent an amount of Rs. 1008.89 crore which was 96.61% of the RE allocation of the Department. The Department utilized the budgetary allocation at RE stage except funds for NER.

The status under Schemes of the Department is provided:

1. The Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP) was appraised by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) Accordingly, the outlay for 2021-22 was revised from ₹220.00 crore to ₹180.00 crore. Against the RE allocation of ₹180.00 crore under the ADIP Scheme an amount of ₹198.69 crore was released. To overcome the difficulties being faced in distribution of aids and assistive devices due to situations arising on account of COVID-19 pandemic, the Department formulated Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) for holding assessment and distribution camps under the ADIP Scheme. As a result, about 110% of the allocated budget was utilized under the scheme.

2. The Scheme of Scholarship for the Students with Disabilities (Divyangjan) was appraised by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). Accordingly, the outlay for 2021-22 was revised from ₹125.00 crore to ₹110.00 crore. Against the RE allocation of ₹110.00 crore under the Scholarship Scheme, an amount of ₹120.25 crore was released. As a result, about 110% (approx) of the allocated budget was utilized under the scheme.

3. Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (**SIPDA**) for providing financial assistance for undertaking various activities outlined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. However, the COVID 19 pandemic had slowed down effective implementation of the scheme but the Department had incurred expenditure which is 74 % of RE stage.

Since SIPDA scheme comprises various sub-schemes which are being implemented as per the respective prescribed guidelines. The COVID 19 pandemic undoubtedly affected the functionality of States and their communication with the Department. The proposals were received with incomplete documents and the Department had rigorously followed up with the State/UT Governments in order to achieve the allocated amount in notional BE and RE stage.

Under DDRS/DDRC Scheme the Revised estimates was for Rs. 105.00 crore as against total allocation of Rs. 125.00 crore. A total 100.89 crore was utilized under DDRS as against RE of Rs. 105.00 crore.

The minor shortfall was due to deduction in certain cost norms and closure of projects under DDRS during COVID pandemic. This resulted in lesser average grant of each project for FY 2021-22 due to which RE could not be achieved fully. On submission of applications by NGOs, for grant-in-aid, the applications are first scrutinised at district level and then forwarded to States/UTs for recommendation. Thereafter, the recommended proposals are sent to the Ministry for sanction of grant. In this process, the proposals for grant-in-aid are received mostly in 3rd and 4th quarter of the year. Upon receipt of the proposal, process is started in the Ministry to consider/release GIA such as scrutinizing the proposal, seeking deficient documents from NGOs/State Govt etc. After receipt, proposal is prepared and moved to seek financial concurrence of the IFD after which GIA is released taking administrative approval of Competent Authority in the Ministry. Audited accounts are also received during 3rd or 4th quarter of the year in absence of which GIA proposals of the previous year cannot be considered during the year.

The Department took major measures to utilize the allocated funds at RE stage. However, the suggestion of the Committee is noted for compliance and more effective budgetary utilization.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 2.11)

The Committee note that Department has been able to release ₹545.90 crore during the year 2021-22 till 08th February, 2022 out of the proposals of ₹702.24 crore approved by them. The Committee feel that the Department may find it very difficult to spend the revised allocation of ₹1,044.31 crore as they have been able to approve the proposals to the tune of ₹702.24 crore only. The Committee are not able to apprehend the reasons for delay in releasing the funds for the proposals that have been approved. It is very difficult for the Committee to understand the reasons for failure of the Department in spending the allocation despite of having a sound monitoring mechanism. The Committee feel that there is lack of accountability among the officers responsible to implement the Scheme. The Committee therefore desire that accountability should be fixed to achieve the goals of the Department so that the officials carry out their responsibility sincerely. The Committee would also like the Department to ensure that the time consumed between receipt of proposals and release of funds should be minimised.

Reply of the Government

As against the RE of Rs. 1044.31 crore, the department had spent an amount of Rs. 1008.89 crore which was 96.61% of the RE allocation of the Department/ However, the suggestions of the Committee as regards minimizing the time consumed between receipt of proposals and release of funds is noted for compliance.

(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)

(Recommendation Para No. 3.19)

The Committee note that consequent to the total number of recognized disabilities being increased from 7 to 21 in 2018 after the enforcement of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the Department is in the process of revision of Scheme guidelines and have sought inputs from rehabilitation experts and States/ UT Governments to improve the scheme and make it broad-based in view of more number of disabilities. The Committee are constrained to find that no time limit has been fixed by the Department for completion of this task. In the absence of definite timelines, the Committee are worried as to how much time would be consumed in just revision of guidelines as substantial time has already lapsed since the enactment of the Act in 2016. Further delay would only hamper the welfare of disabled persons. The Committee would therefore, like the Department to set up a time limit to complete the work of revision of guidelines and would like to be apprised of the schedule prepared in this regard.

Reply of the Government

DDRS/DDRC scheme has been revised recently which is effective from 1st April, 2022. All Stakeholders/NGOs/VOs have been informed of accordingly.

(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)

(Recommendation Para No. 4.15)

The Committee are displeased to note that only seven students were selected for 2019-20, six for 2020-21 and five for 2021-22, out of the 20 scholarships fixed under the National Overseas Scholarships for the year 2019-20, 2020- 21 and 2021-22. The Committee find that the criteria of Solvency Certificate has been reduced now compared to the value earlier, which was the total amount

to be spent by the Government on a particular student. The Committee feel that there has been an undue delay on behalf of the Department in taking decision with regard to solvency certificate as they believe that the Department should have made extra efforts to find out the reasons due to which students were not forthcoming for the scholarship. The Committee have further observed that the Overseas Scholarship is implemented offline, which again limits its access among Divyang students from obvious reasons. This aspect needs to be examined too. The Committee would also like to direct the Department to ensure that the desired number of scholarships fixed are awarded henceforth and there is no slackness their part.

Reply of the Government

Against the slot of 20, the number of applications received, applicants recommended for award of scholarship from 2019-20 to 2021-22 is as below:-

S.No.	Year	Number of applications received	Number of students eligible	Number of applicants selected
1	2019-20	8	8	8
2	2020-21	10	6	6
3	2021-22	19	13	13

Due to non-fulfillment of eligibility criteria, students selected for NOS Award are less viz a viz number of applications received in a year, resulting in rejection of their candidature for Award.

The guidelines are revised on receipt of requests from the beneficiaries. The matter regarding Solvency Certificate was taken up and with the approval of competent authority, the amount of solvency certificate reduced to Rs.50,000/-. Hence, there was no delay on the part of the Department. As regard's Committees observation for implementing NOS online, Department has already initiated the proposal and development of a portal for implementing the Scheme in online mode is being taken up with NIC. To enhance the coverage of NOS, Department will propagate the Schemes among the potential beneficiaries in Colleges/Higher Institutions in States/UTs. Department intends to tap all mediums of social media for spreading awareness about NOS Scheme.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 6.9)

The Committee find that the National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) set up in 1997 to promote self employment, extend loans and assist State level organizations to promote economic developmental activities for the benefit of Divyangjan. The Committee are surprised to note that the Budgetary Allocation to NHFDC has been stopped by the Government since 2020-21 as the Government has decided not to enhance equity of the Organisation. The Committee would like the Department to present their views on this development as they are of the opinion that NHFDC set up for the purpose to promote economic development of Divyangjan should not be made to suffer for want of funds. The Committee feel that unavailability of annual funds from the Department to NHFDC would hamper the objective of the Corporation. As regards the performance of NHFDC, there is not much to say as only ₹113.15 crore and ₹133.62 crore could be released in 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively and 18170 and 18326 persons benefitted during these two years. It is further disheartening that the amount released in 2021- 22 is quite less, i.e. ₹ 73.01 crore upto 31 December, 2021 and the number of beneficiaries is only 10296. The Committee are not convinced with the decision of the Government, particularly in the circumstances when they are promoting entrepreneurship under Atmanirbhar Bharat and Skill India Mission. The Committee would appreciate if the matter is taken up with the Ministry of Finance so that the handicapped do not feel discouraged. The Committee would like to be informed of the action taken to increase the number of beneficiaries, alongwith State-wise details of the beneficiaries for the last three years under various schemes of the Corporation.

Reply of the Government

The Budgetary allocation to NHFDC since its inception is in the form of periodic Equity infusions, to be used by NHFDC to run concessional lending schemes for PwDs. So far Government has invested Rs.399.99 crore through such equity infusions in the NHFDC. The budgetary provisions in this regard are guided by the requirements projected by the NHFDC. The net-worth of the NHFDC as on 31.03.2022 stood at Rs.496.21 crore and it had Rs.103.11 crore investible pool on that date (Cash receipts through loan repayments etc.). The average annual fresh lending of NHFDC in the past ten years being about Rs.100 crore, the NHFDC took a call to take a breather from the Equity infusions till the time its own funds were deployed for concessional lending among the stake holders. However, DEPwD is committed and would be providing required budgetary support whenever demanded by NHFDC. Despite the challenging conditions on account of COVID-2019 and almost

complete lock-downs, the fresh loan disbursements by the NHFDC during the Financial Year 2021-22 stood at Rs.112.74 crore as on 31st March, 2022.

2. NHFDC has taken the following actions to increase the number of concessional loan beneficiaries during the last three years are as under:

i) Simplification & Consolidation of Lending Policy & Guidelines

The Corporation simplified the lending process and guidelines to make it simpler and consolidated various schemes of the Corporation to two main schemes, i.e., DivyangjanSwavalmabanYojana (DSY) and Vishesh Micro Finance Yojana (VMY).

ii) Enhancement in the upper loan limit from Rs.25.00 lakh to Rs.50.00 lakh (Under DSY)

The upper limits of loan under various schemes of the Corporation were increased to make it convenient for PwDs to start economic ventures involving larger financial requirements.

iii) Delegation of Authority in favour of Implementing Agencies for sanction of loan uptoRs.50.00 lakhs (Under DSY)

In order to curtail delay in the lending process, the Corporation delegated authority for sanction of loan upto Rs.50.00 lakhs per project, in favour of Implementing Agencies.

iv) Notional Allocation of Funds

The Corporation notionally allocates funds at the beginning of the financial year in favour of the implementing agencies.. 50% of the funds so allocated, is released to the implementing agencies as 'advance funding' on the acceptance of the allocation and request for release of the advance fund. The balance part of the notional allocation is released on receipt of the request for the same, provided 80% of the advance funds already released during the financial year has been utilised by the agency. In the above mechanism, the implementing agency is already having the funds with it and can release the same to the PwD applicant.

v) The Corporation has extended loan area and activities indirectly contributing to income generation of PwDs have also been included.

The Corporation has widened the scope /activities for extending concessional loan assistance to the PwDs. Thus, activities indirectly contributing to economic empowerment of PwDs are also now covered under NHFDC scheme.

vi) Opening up new windows for channelizing funds for benefit of PwDs

The Corporation has entered into MoA with PSBs/RRBs for extending the outreach to the target group. The Corporation has already entered into arrangement with 4(four) PSBs and 17 RRBs for the said purpose.

vii) Tie up with CSC –SPV Ltd. for extending hand-holding support to PwDs

In order to extend the outreach and provide hand-holding support to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in availing concessional credit under NHFDC Scheme; NHFDC entered into Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC-SPV), a Special Purpose Vehicle incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), GoI.

viii) Direct Lending : pilot projects

The Corporation has taken the initiative to extend some projects on pilot basis for empowering PwDs. The Corporation ensures that the concerned borrower is not only extended concessional loan but also the much needed business connect resulting in revenue generation for the project/PwD.

ix) Vishesh Microfinance Yojana (VMY)

The NHFDC revived Micro financing in the name of Vishesh Microfinance Yojana (VMY) in Financial Year 2019-20 to cater to small financial needs of PwDs at their doorstep. Till now, StreeNidhi Credit Co-operative Federation, Andhra Pradesh and StreeNidhi Credit Co-operative Federation, Telangana are the major partners of NHFDC in extending loan assistance to the target group under VMY.

State-wise details of beneficiaries of the last three years under various lending schemes of the NHFDC

S.N.	Fin. Yr. State	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022	
		Amt. Released	Benef. (Nos.)	Amt. Released	Benef. (Nos.)	Amt. Released	Benef. (Nos.)

1	Tamil Nadu	2,501.26	5,001	3,000.00	6,000	3,000.00	6,000
2	Telangana	0.00	0	1,000.00	3,485	1,000.00	3,485
3	Kerala	1,058.00	1,055	4,504.00	4,504	2,263.50	2,254
4	Haryana	20.17	3	1,369.17	1,316	1,311.33	1,309
5	Rajasthan	1,025.37	1,017	619.94	601	1,224.78	1,202
6	Jammu & Kashmir	987.57	976	153.88	144	737.50	737
7	Himachal Pradesh	300.00	300	400.00	400	500.00	500
8	Gujarat	355.00	351	55.00	51	380.41	378
9	Uttar Pradesh	2,112.14	2,075	287.28	337	204.84	263
10	Chhattisgarh	0.00	0	0.00	0	205.00	119
11	Punjab	139.00	136	113.00	113	94.82	107
12	Jharkhand	100.00	100	5.00	5	100.00	100
13	Delhi	83.98	29	19.12	2	26.89	85
14	Meghalaya	50.00	50	20.00	20	50.00	50
15	Sikkim	0.00	0	21.00	21	50.00	50
16	Madhya Pradesh	20.64	3	125.63	86	82.09	36
17	Mizoram	0.00	0	20.00	20	21.00	21
18	Chandigarh	7.40	30	1.75	7	2.25	9
19	Maharashtra	12.65	3	10.53	1	3.98	2
20	Nagaland	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.40	2
21	Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.20	1
22	Assam	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.25	1
23	Bihar	5.22	2	6.02	0	6.88	1
24	Odisha	0.00	0	9.22	1	1.75	1
25	Andhra Pradesh	2,500.00	6,764	1,501.72	3,718	0.00	0
26	Karnataka	1.12	1	0.25	1	0.00	0
27	Lakshadweep	0.00	0	40.00	40	0.00	0
28	Tripura	0.00	0	70.25	70	0.00	0
29	Uttarkhand	37.00	37	0.50	1	6.83	0
30	West Bengal	5.20	2	8.55	2	0.00	0
	Total	11,321.72	17,935	13,361.81	20,946	11,274.70	16,713

(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) O.M.

No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)

(Recommendation Para No. 7.17)

The Committee note that while in the revised scheme effective from 1st April, 2022, the cost of ceiling of aids and devices has been increased from ₹10,000/- to ₹15,000/-, subsidy has been increased from ₹25,000/- to ₹50,000/- in case of motorized cycle and amount of admissible grant under Cochlear implant progress has been enhanced from ₹6.00 lakh per unit to ₹7.00 lakh per unit, feel that the fund allocation of ₹235 crore for 2022-23 may prove inadequate. The Committee are of the firm opinion that after revision of Scheme fund allocation should have also been increased so that the Department do not have to compromise on the number of beneficiaries. The Committee would therefore,

recommend that the fund allocation for 2022-23 should be revised for the Scheme so that the demand of disabled persons for purchase / fitting of aids/ appliances during 2022-23 is met adequately.

Reply of the Government

As explained in reply to para-7.16 above, the ADIP Scheme was appraised by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and due to impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the economy of the country, the EFC restricted the overall outlay under the ADIP Scheme upto ₹1176.00 crore for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Keeping in view the overall outlay the allocation for 2021-22 was kept for Rs.180.00 crore. However, due to revision in the cost-ceiling of aids and assistive devices, enhanced budget allocation of Rs. ₹235.00 crore has been made for 2022-23. Further, the observations of the Committee have been noted for compliance and more budget will be sought under the Scheme at RE stage if found feasible.

(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)

CHAPTER- III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

(Recommendation Para No. 2.10)

The Committee find that the non-receipt of Utilisation Certificates from the State Governments has remained a recurring problem, which has resulted in non-release of funds by the Department to the State Governments. This is cited as the principal reason for non-utilisation of funds by the Department. While the Committee has been recommending on this issue continuously, the Department has not been able to sort out this issue since long and as a result, the beneficiaries are being deprived of the Schemes for none of their fault. However, no substantial action has been taken till date to evolve sound system to get rid of this problem. In 2020-21 again non-receipt of utilisation certificates from the State Governments have been cited as being responsible for non-utilisation of funds granted to the Department. The Committee earnestly desire that the Department should evolve a system to tackle the issue of non-receipt of utilisation certificates from the State Governments. The Committee believe that the Department do realises that non-release of funds to State Governments means that the empowerment and rehabilitation of Divyangjan is badly affected and the same cannot be taken casually. The Committee do acknowledge that the Department has made a headway for bringing improvement in the implementation of Schemes like ADIP, SIPDA, NHFDC, etc. by way of surprise inspection, change in fund flow mechanism, simplification of processes etc. yet the issue of delayed/flawed UCs from State Governments lingers on. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should seriously address the shortfalls in spending the budgetary allocation due to non-receipt of utilisation certificates from the State Governments and take concrete steps to resolve this issue without hampering the welfare activities for Divyangjan.

Reply of the Government

1. All the schemes of the Department are Central Sector Schemes where the Implementing Agencies are directly funded by the Department. However, in few scheme components the funds are disbursed to State Governments. The efforts made in this direction are elucidated below:

As regards Creation of Barrier Free Environment and Accessible India Campaign (AIC) of SIPDA scheme, the sub-schemes have a set of eligibility criteria and the guidelines and accordingly the proposals need to be sent for processing of grants. These are conveyed to States/UTs who are required to follow the procedures while submitting proposals. If any State/UT sends the proposal in the correct format as per requirements laid down, then it helps in processing it expeditiously. Department regularly writes to States/UTs and takes up the issue at every level including during visits at the level of Hon'ble Minister, Hon'ble Ministers of States, Secretary, Joint Secretary and other officials. Video Conferencing sessions with States/UTs invariably feature this issue to clear their pendency of Utilization Certificates (UCs) so that any new proposal would not be on hold for want of the submission of utilization certificates. Demi-official letters are regularly written to States/UTs on 12.07.2022, 24.02.2022, 29.10.2021, 05.08.2021 and 30.06.2021 for clearing the pending UCs. These efforts have helped to bring down the pendency of UCs of States/UTs from Rs.305.78 crore to Rs. 258.52 crore in the period March, 2021 to March 2022.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 3.17)

Under DDRS Scheme, the Committee are constrained to note that the Department could spend ₹101.66 crore out of ₹105.00 crore provided for 2019-20 at RE stage and ₹83.18 crore out of ₹85 crore provided for 2020-21 at RE stage. Further, the Department has been able to release grants-in-aid worth ₹47.00 crore only out of ₹105.00 crore provided at RE stage in 2020-21 and proposals of ₹23.00 crore are statedly under process of release. The Committee are also informed that ₹35 crore for some proposals are likely to be released by the end of financial year 2021-22. Nonetheless, it is clear that the target fixed for 2019-20 and 2020-21 were not achieved and the situation has not much improved even for 2021-22 as the Department have reported only 16668 beneficiaries out of the target of 40000 beneficiaries fixed for 2021-22. The performance of the Department perhaps needs to be reviewed as it has neither been able to spend the full budgetary allocation for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 nor been able to achieve the targets. The Committee are pained to note that despite measures taken to speed up implementation of schemes, the sanctioning of the proposals itself consumes considerable time whereas there is a need to expeditiously approve the proposals and immediately release the grand-in-aid. The Committee would like the Department to immediately sanction the proposals and release the grant-in-aid for 2021-22. The

Department should also develop a system for expeditious disposal of proposals so that the work of NGOs is not affected and the beneficiaries are not made to suffer. The Committee would also like the Department to make all out efforts to achieve the targets for 2022-23 and judiciously spend the budgetary allocation and also ensure that the budgetary estimates is not downsized at RE stage for lack of proposals.

Reply of the Government

Revised Estimate (RE) and Actual Expenditure (A E) under DDRS during FY 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 is as under:-

(Rs. in crore)

FY	RE	AE
2019-20	105.00	101.66
2020-21	85.00	83.18
2021-22	105.00	100.89

Beneficiaries target and achievement under DDRS during the FY 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 is as under:-

FY	Target	Achievement
2019-20	45000	38004
2020-21	42370	31542
2021-22	40000	30173

Reason for shortfall, the minor shortfall was due to less expenditure in NE component and deduction in certain cost norms due to closure of projects in COVID pandemic resulting in lesser average grant of each project for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The number of proposals received and sanctioned for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 is as under:-

FY	Received	Sanctioned	Balance
2020-21	459	240	219
2021-22	384	57	327
Total	843	297	546

The Department receives, examines and issues sanction order through a dedicated portal, eAnudaan. There is no procedural delay in approval of the proposal of GIA. However, in case of deficiency in documents etc., the proposal is processed and grant is released only after rectification of the deficiency.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
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(Recommendation Para No. 3.20)

The Committee find that Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) is being implemented by Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) who get Grants-in-aid as financial assistance for rehabilitation of Divyangjan. The NGOs are monitored by the respective States/UTs administrators. The performance of the NGOs in running special schools, projects for pre-school early interventions, leprosy cured persons and cerebral palsied children etc. is reviewed from time to time through inspectors by the State Governments concerned, National Institute and Officers of the Department. The Committee also find that the Department time to time conducts Evaluation Studies through independent evaluating agencies to check proper utilisation of funds by the implementing agencies. The Committee lament the fact that despite of all the system available with the Department, starting from sanctioning of grant-in-aid till the review of the functioning of NGOs, the targets fixed for 2019-20 and 2020- 21 could not be achieved. The Committee have strong doubts about the target fixed for 2021-22 too, particularly when the inspection of beneficiaries and staff was stalled due to Covid pandemic. The Committee note that after the DDRS was revised in April, 2018, cost norms have been enhanced by 2.5 times too, which, further calls for better monitoring mechanism, preferably in on-line/hybrid mode as per the existing situation, inviting feedback from inspecting agencies as well as having direct dialogue with the beneficiaries and providing satisfactory solutions to their constraints.

Reply of the Government

System of monitoring and control over the performance of the scheme are as under:-

(i) The Schemes/programmes implemented through NGOs are monitored by respective State Governments/UT Administrations. GIA, under DDRS, is released on the basis of recommendation of the concerned State Government along with the Inspection Report (IR) carried out by the concerned State Govt. authorities.

(ii) Fresh/subsequent release of grants-in-aid to implementing agencies during a year is made only on receipt of Utilization Certificates in respect of previous year's grants, which have become due.

(iii) Review of schemes/programmes by the officers of the Ministry during their visits to the States.

(iv) The Ministry also sponsors evaluation studies from time to time through independent evaluation agencies, inter alia, to check proper utilization of funds

by the implementing agencies for which it is sanctioned, under the DDR Scheme. The last evaluation was done in 2021-22.

(v) In the event of proven misappropriation of funds by an NGO, the Department initiates action to blacklist concerned NGOs. The performance of the NGO is reviewed from time to time through inspections by the State Governments concerned, National Institutes and officers of the Ministry.

(vi) This Department has developed an e-Anudaan portal (www.grants-msje.gov.in) for centralized online processing of proposals. For this purpose, the PIAs has to register on NGO-Darpan portal and apply on e-Anudaan for release of GIA. All financial assistance is provided to the Implementing agencies through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and the implementing agencies have to show their expenditure through Expenditure Advance Transfer (EAT) Module.

(vii) A comprehensive checklist has been developed for processing of cases of release of grant-in-aid.

(viii) The implementing agencies are required to submit Disability Certificates/UDID cards of all the beneficiaries.

(ix) The National Information Centre (NIC) has been requested to develop a better MIS for proper monitoring of the scheme.

(x) The e-Anudaan portal is end to end online and linked to Darpan portal of NITI Aayog. NITI Aayog is in process of developing a portal wherein all NGOs can submit their application online through that single portal which will be linked to the portal of the Department for seamless transmission of all data of NGOs and capture at one source.

(xi) A Central Programme Monitoring Unit (CPMU) team is created for inspection and close monitoring of the projects of the scheme. The PMU team/members will conduct surprise inspection of PIAs and will monitor the performance and quality of services rendered by the PIA. They will assist the Program Division in giving the overall performance of the PIAs.

(xii) Every PIA receiving grant under DDRS shall have to submit documents as and when asked by the CPMU or Department for effective monitoring like Bio-metric attendance report of staff, CCTV footage, etc.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 4.14)

The Committee are further astonished to note that the targets fixed under Free Coaching Scholarship Scheme for students with disabilities were not being achieved as empanelment of coaching Institutes reportedly could not be done, in view of the guidelines for coaching institutes with regard to special needs of Divyangjan. The Committee are perturbed to find that from 2019 to 2022, the number of beneficiaries is nil under the Scheme and that more than three years have been taken by the Department to decide to allow students only from 01 April, 2022 to directly apply to the Department now for taking financial assistance for free coaching from an Institute, which enjoy good reputation and have good track record in providing coaching Pan India. The Committee would like to know the reasons due to which assessment of the situation was not timely done and the 58 responsibility fixed for the inordinate delay thus adversely affecting deserving Divyangjan. The Committee believe that the requirement of an institute having good track record in providing coaching pan India, though well-intended, could be a hindrance for students with disabilities as such Institutes may not be easily available across the Country and the student may also find such Institutes unaffordable and inaccessible too. Hence, the Committee recommend that the Department may examine the matter in this light too

Reply of the Government

The guidelines for empanelment of coaching institutes were framed keeping in view the special needs of Divyangjan such as accessibility in infrastructure, course material etc. Since the inception of the Scheme, proposals received for empanelment from NGOs/Institutes/Others were either not in conformity with scheme guidelines or did not fulfill the eligibility criteria prescribed. However, over the years, it was observed that the private coaching institutes which have been providing coaching to general candidates seemed to be reluctant to invest in making the infrastructure accessible for Divyangjan. Therefore, Department proposed Mode-II, wherein students shall have the liberty to take coaching from the Institute of his/her own choice, which have been approved by Hon'ble Min SJE. Mode -I of the Free Coaching Scheme have been discontinued with the approval of Hon'ble Min SJE. With regard to Committee's observation that Institutes having good track record may not be easily available across the country, it is stated that in Mode II, this is the only and bare minimum criteria contained in the Scheme guidelines, incorporated with a view to avoid the fake institutes.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 7.16)

The Committee appreciate the fact that under ADIP Scheme, w.e.f. 1 April, 2022, income ceiling, cost ceiling, subsidy for motorized Tricycle and other cost aspects have been raised, as per their desire the Department was not able to fully spend revised allocation during 2021-22, as the Department have been able to spend ₹147.30 crore out of the revised allocation of ₹180.00 crore on assistance to needy persons with disabilities in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and 60 appliances, Reasons cited were Covid 19 Pandemic and modal code of conduct on account of General Elections. Further, the Committee find that the Department was also not able to achieve the physical target fixed for 2020-21 as only 2.58 lakh persons could benefit out of the target of 3.00 lakh fixed for the year 2020-21. The target fixed for 2021-22 and 2022-23 is 2.00 lakh and 2.05 lakh beneficiaries in comparison to 2019-20 when the achievement was 3.51 beneficiaries against the target of 3.00 Lakh beneficiaries. The Committee are unable to understand the logic behind reducing the target for 2021-22 and 2022-23 particularly when the number of disabilities has increased from 7 to 21 with the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and hence it is certain that the number of persons requiring aids and assistance is bound to increase. Hence, they feel that the Department should fix higher targets so that large numbers of disabled persons are able to get assistive devices.

Reply of the Government

During 2020-21, it has already been clarified that due to COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown throughout the country, the camps were postponed w.e.f. 13.03.2020. To continue distribution of aids and assistive devices, the Department formulated a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for identification of beneficiaries and distribution of aids and assistive devices under the ADIP Scheme. Measures to ensure protection and safety such as temperature checks, social distancing, sanitization etc were made a part of the new SOP. The first distribution camp after the issue of the said SOP was held on 15.06.2020 at Firozpur(Punjab). Hence, due to the impact of COVID 19 pandemic which directly affected and prohibited holding of bigger camps in the districts, therefore, less number of beneficiaries were covered.

Regarding reduction of target for 2021-22 it has already been clarified above that due to impact of COVID 19 pandemic which directly affected and prohibited holding of bigger camps in the districts, the physical and financial targets were reduced. However, against the target of 2.00 Lakh beneficiaries, 2.43 Lakh beneficiaries have been benefited under the Scheme.

As regards 2022-23, it is submitted that based on the appraisal of Expenditure Finance Committee(EFC) , and Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), the scheme has been revised which will be implemented w.e.f. 01.4.2022. In the revised scheme, the cost ceiling of aids & assistive devices has been increased from ₹10,000/- to ₹ 15,000/-. In case of Motorized Tricycle, the subsidy has been increased from ₹ 25,000/- to ₹ 50,000/- and amount of admissible grant under Cochlear Implant Program has also been enhanced from ₹6.00 Lakh per unit to ₹7.00 Lakh per unit which would result in coverage of less number of beneficiaries out of the allocated fund by the EFC. While appraisal of the scheme by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), due to impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the economy of the country, the EFC restricted the overall outlay under the ADIP Scheme upto ₹1176.00 crore for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Accordingly, the outlay for 2021-22 was revised from ₹220.00 crore to ₹180.00 crore. Similarly, the budget allocation for 2022-23 has been allocated for ₹235.00 crore. Hence, as per the outlay allocated by EFC for the five years from 2021-22 to 2022-23 and taking into account the revised cost ceiling of aids & assistive devices under the Scheme, it will not be possible by the Department to fix the higher targets. However, the observations of the Committee has been noted for compliance and efforts will be made to cover more number of beneficiaries out of the allocated budget under the scheme and to the Department.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
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CHAPTER-IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION.

Recommendation (Para 3.18)

The Committee find that the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC) scheme came into existence in 1999-2000 and is being funded under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme since 2020-21 has still not come up to the expectations as only 55-60 DDRCs have been made functional out of DDRCs set up in 269 Districts. The Committee understand that the matter gets discussed in the meetings of the Central Advisory Board on Disability, in the presence of State Government functionaries too, yet the pace with which the work has progressed is discouraging. Apparently, the present cost norms are not sufficient to get qualified rehabilitation professionals and there is a particular scarcity of professionals in remote areas. The Committee observe that the Department has delayed taking concrete action to tackle this issue although the initiatives taken by the Department now by revising the guidelines and preparation of model DDRCs would hopefully sort out the deficiencies experienced in setting up DDRCs. The Committee expect DDRCs would be made functional in all 56 269 Districts. The Committee would like to be apprised of the current status and measures being taken to achieve the targets.

Reply of the Government

Current status and measures being taken to achieve the target under DDRC are as under:-

- ❖ Number of disabilities covered has been increased from 7 to 21 in 2018 after enforcement of RPwD Act 2016.
- ❖ According to revised guidelines which are likely to be implemented from 2022-23, DDRCs should preferably be located in close proximity to District Hospital/District early intervention centers.
- ❖ Quality Professionals can now be appointed on consultation basis (part time) or full time. This will assist enhancing availability of professionals as per requirements within the grants constraints. Ministry is in the process of preparing model DDRCs features for assisting states/UTs in setting up and running DDRCs effectively.
- ❖ Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has communicated to all States/UTs to send the proposal for setting up of DDRCs in districts of respective states.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
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Recommendation (Para 5.8)

The Committee are surprised to find that out of the five Centres for disabilities Sports in five zones of the Country proposed to be set up in consequent upon the Budget announcement of 2014-15, only 2 Centres viz Gwalior and Shillong may finally be set up as the Centre for disability sports at Gwalior is likely to be completed by June, 2022 and the financial allocation for the Centre at Shillong has been made. The Committee are unable to understand the reasons for the failure of the Department in fructifying the vision of the Government announced in Budget Speech of 2014-15, even after a period of more than six years has passed particularly in the circumstances where no dedicated sports training facilities for Divyangjan existed in the Department of DEPwD. The Committee are apprehensive about the time the Centre at Gwalior would consume to start functioning as only the work is expected to be completed by June, 2022. The Committee would therefore, like the Department to make the Centre at Gwalior functional immediately after the construction work is completed and necessary action may be initiated in this regard right now. The Committee, with regard to Centre at Shillong would like to advise that a time bound approach may be adopted by the Department for early completion of work and the proposal with regard to remaining Centres may be initiated for consideration of the competent authority. The issue needs focused attention now that so many of Divyang sportspersons have given excellent performances and won medals for the country in Special Olympics and other international sports events. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of work with regard to remaining proposed Centres.

Reply of the Government

As regards the ongoing work of the Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior, regular review/follow-up is being done with the CPWD as the executing agency for expeditious completion of the work.

2. Further, as of now, only one Centre for Disability Sports being set up at Gwalior has been approved. The work in respect of other such Centre would be taken up only after the approval of Competent Authority.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

CHAPTER-V

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

(Recommendation Para No. 4.13)

With regard to the schemes meant for educational empowerment of Divyangjan, the Committee are perturbed to note that the budgetary allocation under six schemes of scholarships/fellowship for students with disabilities has not only remained stagnant but also the target fixed under each of these schemes have not been achieved due to insufficient applications received from various State Governments/UTs owing to Covid-19 pandemic. As the Ministry had informed, funds could not be released by them as verified applications were received towards the end of Financial Year/in the beginning of next Financial Year. Since the funds could not be released in previous year due to late receipt of applications, it was conveniently assumed that the same scenario would continue next year and similar budgetary allocation as well as targets were fixed for succeeding year which is evident from the fact that since 2019-20 till date, 200 National fellowships, 1700 Post-Matric scholarships, 300 Top Class Education, 2000 free coaching, 20 National Overseas scholarships and 25000 pre-matric scholarships are the targets fixed every year with not change. It is another matter that except the National Fellowship Scheme, no other targets were achieved. The Committee believe that the Department needs to work sincerely and find out the means to obviate such instances. The Committee also feel that there is lack of coordination between the Department and the State/UT Governments as a result of which timely action is not initiated and students are made to suffer. They would like Department to take appropriate measures so that disabled students are not deprived of the Scholarship schemes of the Department. As the Committee were informed that sufficient applications in SC, ST category and from North East Region were not received, the Department should take effective steps to disseminate the awareness about these Scholarship Schemes among disabled students belonging to these categories and North-East States so that they can also get the benefit of these Schemes.

Reply of the Government

The target fixed under the Scholarship Schemes except Free Coaching have largely been achieved in 2021-22, due to relentless efforts by the Department to create awareness through advertisement in Print Electronics/Social media along with regular VCs with representatives of States/UTs Administrations.

Details of the applications finally verified and scholarship released under the Schemes on boarded on NSP in 2021-22 are given in the Table-I below:-

Table-I

S.No.	Name of the Scheme	Slots	Applications finally verified	Applications verified for payment by NSP	Applications finally paid on date
1	Pre matric	25000	21052	19327	16000
2	Post matric	17000	25305	16658	16493
3	Top Class	300	435	294	292

While appraising the scheme Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), restricted the overall outlay under the Scholarship Scheme upto ₹560.00 crore for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Accordingly, the outlay for 2021-22 was revised from ₹125.00 crore to ₹110.00 crore. Similarly, the budget allocation for 2022-23 has been allocated for ₹105.00 crore.

Department had received sufficient number of applications under SC and ST category, as is evident from the Table-II below that funds under these two categories were fully utilized/released to the beneficiaries. As regards, NER, Department will increase the awareness measures and will ensure enhanced propagation of the Schemes in NER through all possible mediums of advertisement:

Table-II
(Rs.in crore)

S.No.	Head	Funds Allocated		Funds Released
		BE	RE	
1	SC	10.87	14.75	14.87
2	ST	3.27	3.27	3.27

Since, EFC has fixed the outlay ceiling for the five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26, it will not be possible for the Department to increase the targets viz a viz the allocation. However, the observation of the Committee has been noted for compliance and efforts will be made to fully utilize the slots out of the allocated budget under the scheme and to the Department.

Insofar as coordination is concerned, officers of the Department are in regular touch with functionaries of the Social Welfare Department through

telephone, WhatsApp Group and issues warranting action are immediately brought to the notice of the Nodal Officers of States/UTs in these forums for quick redressal.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

(Recommendation Para No. 7.18)

The Committee are perturbed to note that the Ministry of Rural Development provides disability pension @₹300/- per month per persons with disabilities aged 18-79 years and ₹ 500 for the persons aged 80 years and above with severe and multiple disabilities and belonging to the below the poverty line category as per the criteria prescribed by the Central Government under Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme of NSAP. The States/UTs are also topping up on central assistance but with a meager amount. The Committee had earlier made a recommendation for enhancement of Central assistance towards disability pension. Since, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is the nodal Department for the overall welfare of disabled persons, the Committee desire that the Department should take up this matter again with the Ministry of Rural Development and pursue the matter for 61 enhancing central assistance towards disability pension from ₹300 to reasonable amount with the provision for periodic revision so that the poor and needy disabled persons get a decent amount of pension to fulfill their basic needs.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Rural Development has been requested at the level of Secretary, DEPwD to enhance quantum of central assistance towards disability pension being provided under their Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme vide letter dated 23.02.2022. The matter is being followed up with them.

**(Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
O.M. No.1/4/2022-23/Budget/DEPwD dated 22nd August, 2022)**

NEW DELHI;

**09 December, 2022
18 Agrahayana, 1944 (Saka)**

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

MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2022-23) HELD ON FRIDAY, 9th DECEMBER, 2022

The Committee met from 1030 hrs. to 1100 hrs. in Chairperson's Chamber, Room No. 113, Parliament House Annexe, Extension Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
3. Shri Bholanath 'B.P. Saroj
4. Smt. Pramila Bisoyi
5. Shri Thomas Chazhikadan
6. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
7. Smt. Geeta Kora
8. Smt. Supriya Sule
9. Smt. Rekha Verma
10. Shri Y. Devendrappa

RAJYA SABHA

11. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
12. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
13. Shri Narayan Koragappa
14. Smt. Mamata Mohanta
15. Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda - Additional Secretary
2. Shri V.P Nauriyal - Joint Secretary
3. Smt. Mamta Kemwal - Director
4. Shri Krishendra Kumar - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting has been convened to consider and adopt the following draft Reports:

(i) XX XX XX XX

(ii) 39th Report on the Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-second Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

(iii) XX XX XX XX

(iv) XX XX XX XX

3. The Chairperson then requested the Members to give their suggestions, if any, on the draft Reports. The Report was adopted by the Committee without any modifications.

4. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Report and to present the same to both the Houses on 12.12.2022.

The Committee then adjourned.

XX Does not pertain to this Report.

APPENDIX-II

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SECOND REPORT (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA) OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT ON 'DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2022-23) OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

	Total	Percentage
I. Total number of Recommendations	15	
II. Observations/ Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:- Rec. Para No.2.9, 2.11, 3.19, 4.15, 6.9 & 7.17.	06	40%
III. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply:- Rec. Para No.2.10, 3.17, 3.20, 4.14 & 7.16.	05	33.34%
IV. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:- Rec. Para No. 3.18 & 5.8	02	13.33%
V. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature:- Rec. Para No.4.13 & 7.18	02	13.33%
		100%