

Need to introduce a dedicated Rural Assistive Technology Scheme for Divyangjan through Community Health Centres, PHC Dispensary and AMRIT Pharmacies-Laid

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY (PALI): I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the urgent need for expanding access to assistive technology (AT) for persons who are differently-abled in rural India. As per the Census 2011, over 26.8 million Indians are differently abled, and 69% of them live in rural areas. Yet access to essential assistive aids remains low. A WHO-UNICEF report (2022) estimates that AT access in countries like India is as low as 3% of actual need. Another study found that rural residents, especially women and the elderly, face significantly higher unmet needs due to affordability and lack of local access. While the ADIP scheme has made progress, its impact remains largely urban-centric. Most rural divyangjans continue to buy devices out-of-pocket or go without it. I appreciate NITI Aayog's efforts to formulate a dedicated policy for boosting domestic manufacturing of ATs. However, there is an urgent need to expand last-mile access to Assistive Aids like prosthetics and smart mobility devices. I therefore urge the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to introduce a dedicated Rural Assistive Technology Outreach Scheme, leveraging Community Health Centres, PHC dispensary, and AMRIT Pharmacies. This would ensure that every divyangjan has access to affordable, quality assistive devices.