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Title : Regarding need for effective implementation of 'The Persons with Disabilities Act of 1996' for the benefit of disabled persons.

SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU (KAKINADA): India is growing into a dominant global economy and is gaining international recognition as a services economy. For a Nation in growth it is equally important to remember that the true measure of a civilized nation is what it does for deprived citizens, especially those underprivileged ones and those with special needs, those we refer to as the disabled or the 'handicapped'. India today has 70 Million disabled people.

The Persons with Disabilities Act of 1996 mandates non-discrimination in access to public buildings and transportation. The real question is whether as a nation we have done enough or are doing enough to incorporate in our planning process the needs of these special people. I think the answer is obvious for all to see and it is important that a resurgent India reflects these needs.

It took the famous British Physicist Stephan Hawking;s (who is wheelchair bound) visit to India in 2001 before we had even thought to making arrangements for wheelchair ramps at historic monuments in India.

On my recent visits to a developed nation like Japan and developing economy like China, I was pleasantly surprised to see special pavements all along the public pathways, in public buildings and in the Metro a lane that enabled the blind to walk without any assistance. I think we have to as a nation act fast in implementing India's law on disabled rights, which also calls for steps to be taken to ensure a barrier-free environment in workplaces and schools and requires for 3 percentage of lower level Government jobs to be reserved for the disabled.

I request the Central Government to look into the matter.