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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND EMPOWERMENT (2021-22)**

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2022-23)

THIRTY-SECOND REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2022/ Chaitra, 1944 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 24.03.2022

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 24.03.2022



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2022/ Chaitra, 1944 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2021-22)**

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. Shri Y. Devendrappa
9. Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
10. Shri Hans Raj Hans
11. Shri K. Shanmuga Sundaram
12. Shri Abdul Khaleque
13. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
14. Smt. Geeta Kora
15. Shri Vijay Kumar
16. Shri Akshaibar Lal
17. Shri V. Srinivas Prasad
18. Shri Arjun Singh
19. Smt. Supriya Sule
20. Smt. Rekha Verma
21. Shri Tokheho Yepthomi

Rajya Sabha

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
23. Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara
24. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
25. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
26. Shri N.Chandrasegharan
27. Shri Narayan Koragappa
28. Smt. Mamata Mohanta
29. Smt. Chhaya Verma
30. Shri Ramkumar Verma
- *31 Vacant

* Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla Resigned w.e.f 16.03.2022

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Mamta Kemwal Director
3. Shri Krishendra Kumar Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2021-22) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Thirty-Second Report on 'Demands for Grants for the year 2022-23' pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).

2. The Committee considered the 'Demands for Grants for 2022-23' 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 9th February, 2022. 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 18th February, 2022. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at the sitting held on 22nd March, 2022.

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 for 2022-23'.

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

NEW DELHI;

SMT. RAMA DEVI

22 March, 2022
01 Chaitra, 1944 (Saka)

Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

REPORT
CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTORY

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with effect from 02 May, 2012 to give focused attention to policy issues and meaningful thrust to the activities aimed at welfare and empowerment of the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). 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 related Central Ministries, State/UT Governments, NGOs etc. in matters pertaining to disability. The strategy for their empowerment is through schemes for educational, economic and social development and physical rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and by creating an environment that provides them with equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. The Department deals 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).

1.2 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.

1.3 As per Census, 2011 there are 2.68 crore persons with disabilities in the country who contribute 2.21 per cent of the total population. Out of the total population of Persons with Disabilities., approximately 1.50 crore are men and 1.18 crore are women. About 36% of the persons with disabilities are working (male- 47% and female-23%). Among the workers with disabilities, 31% constitute agricultural laborers. Fifty percent of the PwD population in the age group of 15-59 years is working whereas 4% of children with disabilities in the age group below 14 years are working.

1.4 The details of numbers by type of disability, as per Census 2011 are given below:

Type of Disability	Persons	Males	Females
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%)

1.5 The Department furnished the details of State-wise population of PwDs as per census 2011 as follows:

S.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

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 2022-23 are given under Demand No. 94. The detailed Demands for Grants of the Department were laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha on 9th February, 2022. The Budget Estimates (BE), Revised Estimates (RE) and the Actual Expenditure (AE) of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities are as follows:-

Rs. In Crore

Year	Budget Estimate	Revised Estimate	Actual Expenditure
2019-20	1204.90	1100.00	1016.18
2020-21	1325.39	900.00	861.63
2021-22	1171.77	1044.31	539.00 (upto 25.01.2022)
2022-23	1212.42	--	--

2.2 The Department has also furnished the following statement showing BE, RE and AE on all the schemes during the years, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and BE for 2022-23 alongwith AE of current financial year till 31.01.2022

Rs. in crore														
Scheme/Non Scheme-wise Plan Outlays and Expenditure during 2019-20 to 2021-22 & BE-2022-23														
S I. N o	Name of the Scheme/Programme	2019-20				2020-21				2021-22 (upto 25.01.2022)				2022-23
		BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	Shortfall/ Excess exp., if any, indicating reasons in brief	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	Shortfall/ Excess exp., if any, indicating reasons in brief	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure	Shortfall/ Excess exp., if any, indicating reasons in brief	BE
1	National Institutes	215.00	235.55	233.25	Minor Shortfall	360.00	260.75	256.81	Minor Shortfall	319.00	332.50	211.30	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	365.00

2	Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase of Fitting Devices (ADIP)	230.00	222.50	213.83	Due to non receipt of proposals during the year and also the impact of COVID-19 pandemic funds could not be released.	230.00	195.00	189.13	COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected holding of camps in the districts for distribution of aids and assistive devices.	220.00	180.00	121.48	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	235.00
3	Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)	75.00	105.00	101.61	Entire funds could not be utilised as few proposals were not processed due to COVID 19 pandemic at the fag end of the financial year.	130.00	85.00	83.18	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	125.00	105.00	41.61	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	125.00
4	Rehabilitation Council of India	5.00	5.00	5.00	No Shortfall	5.50	5.50	5.50	No Shortfall	5.50	5.50	4.71	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	6.40
5	Schemes Arising out of The Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA)	315.00	260.00	217.34	At the end of F.Y. 2019-20, an amount of Rs.217.34 crore as 83.59% of the RE could be utilized under SIPDA. SIPDA being an umbrella scheme with ten components had to be downsized by Rs. 55.00 crore. Entire budget RE allocation could not be utilized due to several reasons, including non receipt of complete proposals, Utilization Certificates as well as lockdown being imposed in the country towards close of the financial year due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.	251.50	122.89	103.43	The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has affected many activities. Therefore, a number of proposals were received with incomplete documents or not relevant as per scheme guidelines. On the other hand Utilization Certificates Were awaited from many States/UTs. However, due to rigorous follow-ups for clearance of pending UCs and completion of documents for processing, the expenditure could be incurred of Rs.103.43 crore i.e. 84.16% of RE	209.77	147.31	35.04	The entire allocation is expected to be utilized by 31.03.2022	240.39

6	National Handicapped Finance & Development Corp. (NHFDC)	41.21	0.92	0.92	No Shortfall	001	0.00	0.00	--	0.01	0.00	0.00	-	0.01
7	Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation	60.00	60.00	60.00	No Shortfall	50.00	50.00	50.00	No Shortfall	50.00	60.00	25.00	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	0.10
8	Indian Spinal Injury Centre	4.00	2.60	0.00	Due to non receipt of adequate proposals.	4.00	4.00	3.99	Minor Shortfall	Merged under SIPDA				
9	National Institute For Inclusive And Universal Design	0.01	0.00	0.00	-	0.01	0.00	0.00	---	0.01	0.00	0.00	--	0.01
10	Establishment of Institute of Sign Language, Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC)	5.00	5.00	4.20	Due to non receipt of adequate proposals	Merged with NIs.								
11	Support for Establishment / Modernization of Braille Presses	8.00	3.60	0.87	Due to non receipt of adequate proposals	Merged under SIPDA.								
12	Establishment of College for Deaf in 5 Regions of the Country	3.00	0.00	0.00	Owing to non-receipt of proposal in order	Merged under SIPDA.								
13	Establishment of Centre for Disability Sports	17.00	17.00	15.07	Slight shortfall. Funds were released as per the Demand of CPWD.	100.00	19.50	18.93	The BE allocation could not be utilized as the approval of the Centre for Disability Sports at Shillong Meghalaya is under process and is likely to be finalized at the end of the financial year. The RE allocation has been almost utilized.	53.41	40.00	0.00	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	60.00

14	Budgetary Support to National Trust	20.00	20.00	20.00	No Shortfall	39.50	30.00	29.80	Minor Shortfall	30.00	30.00	22.21	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	35.00	
15	Setting up of State Spinal Injury Centres	5.00	0.00	0.00	Owing to non-receipt of proposal in order	-									Merged under SIPDA
16	Establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation	20.00	20.00	17.26	Slight shortfall. Funds were released as per the Demand of CPWD.	-									Merged under NIs.
17	Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	125.00	108.67	95.15	Due to non receipt of payment files during the year on account of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic funds could not be released during the year.	125.00	100.00	97.40	Due to non receipt of payment files during the year on account of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic funds could not be released during the year.	125.00	110.00	56.90	The entire allocation will be utilized by 31.03.2022	105.00	
18	Information and Mass Education Cell	28.00	7.00	6.63	1.Priority was given to social media to publicize the schemes instead to outdoor and electronic media campaign. 2.Less number of ADIP camps conducted during the current financial year. 3.Non-receipt of proposals. 4.Due to less number of participations by our PSUs.	-									Scheme is merged under SIPDA Scheme
19	Grants -in-aid to National University of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies	0.01	0.00	0.00	Scheme yet to finalized	0.01	0.00	0.00		0.01	0.00	0.00	Scheme yet to finalized	0.01	
20	Secretariat	25.00	23.50	22.43		25.00	23.50	20.50		29.00	29.00	18.54		35.00	

2 1	CCPD	3.66	3.66	2.62	--	4.86	3.86	2.96		5.06	5.00	2.20		5.50
	Grand Total	1204 .90	1100 .00	1016.18		1325. 39	900.0 0	861.63		1171.77	1044.31	539.00		1212.42

2.3 On being enquired about the reasons due to which revised estimate could not be spent during the last three years even after they were reduced, the Committee were informed in their written reply that:-

"The Department had spent nearly 92.38% and 95.73% of the Revised Allocation during the year 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively. All the schemes in this Department are Central Sector Schemes, where funds are released to the implementing agencies based on demand/proposals whereby the Department itself has to ensure the monitoring and utilization of the funds released. In the last two years due to COVID 19 pandemic the organisations/institutions supported under the schemes are constrained in demand for funds. However, it has been ensured that the voluntary organisations/NGOs still get financial support so that special schools, district rehabilitation centres do not face financial hardships."

2.4 Further, the Department submitted the following specific reasons for the slow trend/underutilisation/reduced allocation in Revised Estimates in preceding financial years:-

- a. Under ADIP Scheme, during 2019-20, sufficient camps could not be held due to imposition of model code of conduct on account General Elections. During 2020-21, in the beginning funds could not be released as 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 taking into account the COVID 19 pandemic. Due to the impact of COVID 19 pandemic, which directly affected holding of bigger camps in the districts, the entire RE allocation could not be released.
- b. Under Scholarship Scheme, during 2020-21 & 2021-22, since the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) was open till late January/February, on account of COVID-19 pandemic, the verified applications were received towards the end of financial year or at the beginning of next financial year, because of which funds to all eligible students could not be released within the year.
- c. Under DDRS/DDRC Scheme, due to COVID-19, the recurring components like hostel, transport, contingency, conveyance allowances of GIA were reduced to 17%.
- d. Skill Training 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.

- e. Outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic had obstructed the smooth working of States/UTs such as activities related to construction/skill training. Overall capacity of training centres was reduced to half after normal capacity due to proper social and physical distancing.
- f. UCs from State Governments were not received under SIPDA Scheme. Due to non-receipt of adequate proposals under SC, ST and NER Heads fund, could not be utilized fully."

2.5 On being asked whether the Department would be able to spend full budgetary allocation for 2021-22 as they have spent ₹562.18 crore up to 25th January, 2022, the Department in their written reply submitted that:-

"As on 08.02.2022, proposals to the tune of ₹702.24 crore are approved by the Department, out of which an amount of ₹545.90 crore has already been released and bills for the remaining amount are being raised. Further, number of proposals have been received in the Department which are at various stages for consideration, therefore, it is expected that the Department will be able to utilise RE allocation by 31.03.2022."

2.6 In this regard, the Secretary, DEPwD submitted during deliberations before the Committee that:-

"मार्च, 31 तक हम करेंगे। अभी आपने चिंता जाहिर किया कि जब जरूरत थी तब उस समय हम क्यों नहीं पहुंच पाएं। इस स्कीम के तहत हमारा ऑब्जेक्टिव होना चाहिए। आज की तारीख में हमारा ऑब्जेक्टिव इस स्कीम को इम्प्लिमेंट करने का तरीका है, जहां भी असेसमेंट कैम्प करते हैं, वहां अगर हजार से कम लाभार्थी होते हैं तो असेसमेंट करने के बाद डिस्ट्रीब्यूट कर दिया जाता है। जहां 1000 से ज्यादा बेनिफिशरीज़ होते हैं, आज की तारीख में इंस्ट्रक्शन स्टैंड करते हैं, हम वहां कैम्प मोड में करते हैं। पहले ढाई महीने कोरोना में निकल गए, तब भी जितना हम कर सकते थे, हमने कोरोना प्रोटोकॉल फॉलो करते हुए कैम्प ऑर्गेनाइज किए, इसके बाद हमने विभाग में विचार-विमर्श किया कि हमें नंबर वन लोगों तक पहुंचना चाहिए। आज की तारीख में जिनकी असेसमेंट हो चुकी है, दो-तीन कैम्पस को ज्वाइन करके वर्चुअल मोड में कर रहे हैं। जैसे मंत्री जी या और डिग्रीटरीज़ एक ही जगह जा सकते हैं, हम दो-तीन जगह को क्लब कर देते हैं और उन कैम्पस का डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन एक साथ कर रहे हैं।"

2.7 As regards to the steps/initiatives taken by the Department to ensure that the allocation made for 2022-23 is fully utilized and the people with disabilities get maximum benefits of various welfare Schemes, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"The Department had submitted a projected BE requirement of ₹1212.42 crore for the year 2022-23 with the objective of maintaining momentum of the ongoing activities and also to initiate new activities as approved by the Cabinet. In case of additional requirement of funds, the additional demand for grant would be raised at the RE stage.

The Budget Estimates in respect of the Central Sector Schemes namely ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS and Scholarship are recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in its meeting held on 11.08.2021 for continuation of next five years. All the four schemes are appraised and approved with financial allocation and physical targets for the entire period of the 15th Finance Commission's recommendations."

2.8 On being enquired about the monitoring mechanism available with the Department and how effective have been this mechanism to achieve the objectives of the schemes, the Department submitted in their written reply stated that:-

- a. The grant-in-aid proposal for each year is considered by the Ministry only after receipt of inspection report. Inspection is carried out by the State authorities and recommended by the state government. In addition, the Ministry itself conducts inspection through National Institutes (autonomous bodies under the Ministry). Further, the Department is establishing a Central Project Monitoring Unit (CPMU) and data strategic unit (DSU) to monitor all the schemes of Department and data analysis and strategy for further action which will itself be a sub-scheme under the umbrella SIPDA scheme.
- b. The Executive Council/Standing Council and General Council of respective NIs review the performance of National Institutes/Composite Regional Centre from time to time and give suitable advice/directions for bringing in needed improvement in the performance. In addition, the Departmental level review of performance is also undertaken on regular basis.
- c. Under ADIP Scheme, grants are released on the recommendations of the concerned State Government upon receipt of an Inspection Report in respect of a particular implementing agency. The recommending authority also conducts 15% test checks in case of grants-in-aid is up to ₹10.00 Lakh and 10% test checks in case of grants-in-aid exceeds ₹10.00 Lakh of beneficiaries from the previous grant.
- d. The organizations are also required to furnish audited utilization certificate in respect of the previous grant(s) released. The audited reports as well as UCs are vigorously pursued.
- e. Implementing Agencies are also required to maintain a website and upload details of grants received, utilized and list of beneficiaries along with photo and Ration Card Number/Voter ID Number/Aadhar Card Number, as the case may be. (As per instructions of the Govt., Aadhar Number is obtained but not displayed).

- f. On-line submission and processing of NGOs proposals on e-Anudan Portal.
- g. Mandatory Registration of NGOs on NITI Aayog Portal (NGO Darpan).
- h. Utilization of grants-in-aid through EAT (Expenditure Advance Transfer) Module of PFMS.
- i. The MIS Portal for maintaining the data of beneficiaries centrally has been prepared and will be launched shortly. Through the portal monitoring of distribution of aids & assistive devices will be done efficiently. This will also have the facility to ensure de-duplication of beneficiaries."

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.

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.

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.

CHAPTER - III

DEENDAYAL DISABLED REHABILITATION SCHEME (DDRS)

DDRS is a central sector scheme of the Department to provide grant-in-aid to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered under Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995/ Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or socio-functional levels and to create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, Social Justice and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for ensuring effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

3.2 The District Disability Rehabilitation Centres are set up and funded under DDRS from the year 2020-21. DDRCs are being implemented since 1999-2000. 325 Districts were initially identified for establishing DDRC, out of which, DDRCs were set up in 269 districts. About 55-60 DDRCs are functional.

3.3 The Budgetary Estimate, Revised Estimate and Actual Expenditure under the Scheme is as follows:-

(₹ in crore)

2019-20			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23 (upto 25.01.2022)
BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE	RE	AE	BE
75.00	105.00	101.61	130.00	85.00	83.18	125.00	105.00	41.61	125.00

3.4 The physical targets/ achievements under the Scheme are as follows:-

(₹ in crore)

2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23
Physical Target	Achievements	Physical Target	Achievements	Physical Target	Achievements	Physical target
45000	38004	42370	31542	40000	16668	40000

3.5 On being asked about the reasons due to which the Department was unable to utilize the funds sanctioned at RE stage, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"Revised estimate was reduced due to less expenditure in NE component and deduction in certain recurring cost norms due to closure of projects in COVID pandemic resulting in lesser average grant of each project for FY 2020-21. Cost norms were reduced under the heads transport, conveyance, hostel maintenance, stipend, closure of projects due to COVID-19 etc. RE for the year 2020-21 was ₹ 85 crore against which Grants-in-Aid worth ₹ 83.18 crore was released under the scheme."

3.6 With regard to the grant-in-aid released during the last five years along with the number of beneficiaries, the Department inter-alia submitted in their written reply that the services rendered by the institutions funded by the Ministry have benefited a total number of 1,81,509 beneficiaries in the last 5 years. The detailed grant-in-aid and the beneficiaries are as follows:-

Year	GIA released (₹ in Crore)	No. of Project Assisted	No. of Beneficiaries
2016-17	45.00	592	34431
2017-18	60.00	563	35729
2018-19	70.00	543	41803
2019-20	101.66	432	38004
2020-21	83.18	340	31542

3.7 Since the financial resources at the disposal of the Department could not be spent and the physical targets fixed were also not achieved during previous two years, the Committee were *inter-alia* informed by the Department in their written reply that:-

"Revised estimate vis-a-vis actual expenditure for last two years is as follows:

Year	Revised estimate (₹ in crore)	Actual expenditure (₹in crore)
2019-20	105	101.66
2020-21	85	83.18

There was minor shortfall in achieving the targets as indicated above. For the year 2021-22, about Grant-in-aid worth ₹ 47.00 Crore has been released and proposals for ₹23.00 crore are under process of release. It is expected that proposals for ₹35 crore are likely to be released by the end of financial year 2021-22, thereby meeting revised estimate targets”

3.8 On being enquired about the utilization of funds allocated to DDRC as 55-60 DDRCs have been made functional out of DDRCs set up in 269 districts, the Department stated in their written reply that upto the financial year 2019-20, funding of DDRC was as a sub-scheme under the SIPDA Scheme of the Department. From the financial year 2020-21, DDRCs are being funded under DDRS Scheme.

Year	Fund Allocated (RE) for DDRCs(₹ in Crore)	GIA released to PIA (₹ in crore)	No. of DDRCs
2018-19	10.00	5.26	45
2019-20	4.00	3.18	22
2020-21	No separate allocation of fund provided to DDRC scheme and GIA was released through the funds allocated under DDRS scheme	5.75	28

3.9 With regard to the sluggish pace in establishing DDRCs, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

- a. There is scarcity of trained and qualified rehabilitation professionals especially in remote parts of the country. Further, in view of the present cost norms, such rehabilitation professionals find it difficult to provide quality services to the persons with disabilities. There was high attrition rate of professionals due to less remuneration on full time basis. Because of these reasons, full time deployment could not be possible in all parts of country. In the revised proposed guidelines of the Scheme, Medical/Rehabilitation professionals can be appointed on consultation basis (part-time) or full time basis.
- b. Some of the DDRCs were not near to district hospital and located in remote area, thereby posing hindrance for beneficiary to avail benefits.
- c. Rehabilitation and intervention service was available only for 7 types of disabilities. "

3.10 As regards to the initiatives taken to ensure that DDRCs are set up in all the identified districts and made functional the Department submitted in the written reply that:-

- a. Number of disabilities covered has been increased from 7 to 21 after enforcement of RPWD Act 2016.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Ministry is in the process of preparing model DDRCs features for assisting states/UTs in setting up and running DDRCs effectively.
- e. Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has communicated to all States/UTs to send the proposal for setting up of DDRCs in each district of the States/UTs."

3.11 On being enquired whether the Department would be able to achieve the targets set under the Scheme with the budgetary allocation made for 2022-23, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"Keeping in view the presently prevailing demands by States/UTs, the budgetary Estimates of ₹125 crore for 2022-23 appears to be sufficient to support the running and new projects under the scheme. In case of shortfall of funds, the additional demand for grant would be raised at the RE stage. "

3.12 On being asked about the steps taken/proposed for improvement in the implementation of schemes, the Department submitted in their background note that in DDRS, grant is released to NGOs on receipt of State Government recommendation (SGR) which is based on Inspection Report (IR). The Department has decided this year that due to COVID Pandemic, for regular grantee organizations, physical inspection of beneficiaries and staff may not be held. The inspection may be done on the basis of records of beneficiaries and staff who last attended the organisation. Accordingly all the State Governments were advised on 14th July, 2020 in this regard, for the benefit of the targeted group. The scheme guidelines are also currently under revision for which inputs have been sought from rehabilitation experts, State/UT governments to improve the scheme and make it more broad based in view of the number of disabilities covered under the RPwD Act, 2016."

3.13 With regard to the monitoring mechanism available with the Department, the Committee were *inter-alia* informed by the Department in their background note that:-

- a. All proposals under DDRS are received only through on-line portal from the financial year 2014-15
- b. NGOs need to register first on the NGO-DARPAN Portal ID and apply on e-Anudaan for release of GIA
- c. Fresh/subsequent release of grants 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.
- d. The Schemes/programmes implemented through NGOs are also expected to be monitored by respective State Governments/UT Administrations. The proposal are inspected by DSWOs at District level and forwarded by State Governments.
- e. 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 DDR Scheme.
- f. The performance of the NGOs is reviewed from time to time through inspections by the State Governments concerned, National Institutes and officers of the Ministry"

3.14 In this context, the Secretary of the Department submitted during the evidence that:-

"पूरी डीडीआरएस की स्कीम मोस्टली रीईम्बर्समेंट पर है, अर्थात आप पहले काम करेंगे, फिर आपको पैसा वापस किया जाएगा। उसके ऊपर 'ईट मॉड्यूल' भी साथ में लगाया गया, क्योंकि हम स्कीम में लगातार इंप्रूवमेंट कर रहे हैं, ताकि उसकी मॉनिटरिंग ठीक ईएटी तरीके से हो सके।"

3.15 She further submitted that:-

"डीडीआरसी स्कीम बेसिकली जिला मजिस्ट्रेट के अंदर चलती है।... जहां-जहां जिला मजिस्ट्रेट ऐक्टिव हैं, उन्होंने स्कीम के मुताबिक लोग रखे हुए हैं, जिनके कारण उनके पास फंड्स जाते हैं।"

3.16 The State/UT wise funds released during 2018-19 to 2021-22 under DDRS as follows:

(₹ in Lakhs)

S. No.	Name of the State	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As on 31.12.2021)
1	Andhra Pradesh	1452.75	2663.05	1711.80	479.28
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
3	Assam	90.86	124.72	62.02	21.25
4	Bihar	43.87	23.67	0.00	25.74
5	Chattisgarh	40.64	49.78	1.63	0
6	Delhi	29.62	32.65	247.67	71.17
7	Goa	0.59	0.00	0.00	0
8	Gujarat	97.44	131.96	23.32	42.54
9	Haryana	130.74	154.81	140.18	58.01
10	Himachal Pradesh	55.72	71.77	55.31	18.26
11	Jammu & Kashmir	5.79	4.53	0.00	0
12	Jharkhand	1.59	10.39	0.00	0
13	Karnataka	86.05	41.31	81.29	57.32
14	Kerala	584.86	611.82	628.30	521.91
15	Madhya Pradesh	162.96	155.50	214.84	95.40
16	Maharashtra	202.21	342.21	154.33	0
17	Manipur	525.16	974.01	530.09	309.44

18	Meghalaya	54.32	32.59	105.37	11.89
19	Mizoram	19.88	33.90	11.73	0
20	Nagaland	2.49	2.48	26.31	0
21	Odisha	732.76	1001.05	742.03	642.76
22	Punjab	45.54	133.65	98.91	13.63
23	Rajasthan	152.21	261.60	144.01	130.09
24	Tamil Nadu	272.19	191.90	208.24	54.01
25	Tripura	0.27	0.00	0.00	0
26	Uttar Pradesh	760.28	1018.59	1161.31	515.47
27	Uttrakhand	28.65	84.07	29.37	27.04
28	West Bengal	365.88	335.46	311.65	273.99
29	Telangana	1014.16	1646.76	1034.30	545.37
30	Pudducherry	40.42	32.61	18.48	20.22
	Total	6999.9	10166.84	7742.49	3934.79

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.

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 269 Districts. The Committee would like to be apprised of the current status and measures being taken to achieve the targets.

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.

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.

CHAPTER – IV

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Scheme of ‘Scholarships for Students with Disabilities’ is an umbrella Scheme implemented since 1 April, 2018 to fulfill the mandate of Section 31 (1) & (2) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 wherein, every child with benchmark disability shall have the right to free education in a neighborhood school, or in a special school, of his choice. The Scheme comprises of six components, namely, Pre-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Scholarship, Top Class Education, National Overseas Scholarship, National Fellowship for PwDs and Free Coaching. Until 2017-18, six components of the Scheme were implemented as standalone Schemes having separate budgets. The Scheme has been registered in Public Finance Management System (PFMS) with the unique code for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). The merger/unification of the Schemes with effect from 2018-19 has been done to remove the demand-supply imbalance of budget allocation and streamline the implementation process. In the Umbrella Scheme, if there is surplus fund available in one segment, that surplus can be utilized in the other one. The main objective of the Scheme is to empower students with disabilities to study further in order to earn their livelihood and to find a dignified place in the society, as they face several barriers - physical, financial, and psychological in pursuing studies and living with dignity.

4.2 The BE, RE and AE for the 2019-20 to 2021-22 along with BE for 2022-23 under the Umbrella Scheme are as follows:

Year	Budget Allocation (₹ in Crore)	Revised Allocation (₹ in Crore)	Actual Expenditure (₹ in Crore)
2019-20	125.00	108.67	95.15
2020-21	125.00	100.00	97.40
2021-22	125.00	110.00	56.90 (upto 25.01.2022)
2022-23	105.00	-	-

4.3 Scheme-wise physical targets and achievement during 2019-20 to 2021-22 and targets for 2022-23 are as follows:-

Sl. No	Name of Scheme /Project	Physical target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical target	Achievement (upto 25.01.2022)	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical targets
		2019-20			2021-22			2021-22			2022-23
1.	National fellows hip for PwDs	200 fellowsh ip	537	No shortfall	200 fellowsh ip	551 (includin g renewal cases)	No shortfa ll. Selecti on of candid ates for 2020-21 is being done by UGC	200 fellowsh ip	458 (includin g renewal cases)	No shortfall. Selection of candida tes for 2020-21 is being done by UGC	200 Scholars hips
2.	Post Matric Scholarship for student s with disabilities	17000 scholars hip	19978 Schol arshi ps	No shortfall	17000 Scholar ships	12573 Scholars hips	Due to non receipt of propos al on NSP portal	17000 Scholar ships	14231 Scholars hips	The target will be achieved by 31.03.2022.	17000 Scholars hips
3.	Top class education for student s with Disabilities	300 Scholar ships	239 Schol arshi ps	Targets could not be fulfilled as adequate verified application were not received from the State Governmen ts	300 Scholar ships	453 Scholars hips	No shortfa ll	300 Scholar ships	147 Scholars hips	The target will be achieved by 31.03.2022.	300 Scholars hips
4.	Free coaching for student with disabilities	2000 scholars hips	--	Insufficient proposals received from Institutes	2000 Scholar ships	--	Insuffic ient propos als receiv ed from Institut es	2000 scholars hips	--	Insufficie nt propos als received from Institutes	2000 Scholars hips
5.	National Overse as Scholarship for student s with disabilities	20 scholars hips	-	Due to non receipt of sufficient proposals	20 scholars hips	2 scholars hips	Due to non receipt of sufficie nt propos als	20 scholars hips	3 scholars hips	Due to non receipt of sufficient proposals	20 scholars hips
6.	Pre Matric Scholarship for student s with disabilities	25000 Scholar ships	22218 Schol arshi ps	Due to non receipt of proposal on NSP portal	25000 Scholar ships	12488 Scholars hips	Due to non receipt of propos al on NSP portal	25000 Scholar ships	2259 scholars hips	The target will be achieved by 31.03.2022	25000 Scholars hips

4.4 On being enquired about the reasons due to which the Budgetary Estimate for scholarship schemes remained stagnant in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 and even after downsizing at RE stage Department could not fully utilise the allocated fund, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"Less actual expenditure was primarily responsible for stagnant Budget Estimates during 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. The actual expenditure was less on account of insufficient applications received from various State Governments owing to COVID-19 pandemic which broke out in March, 2020. During 2020-21 & 2021-22, since, the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) was open till late January/February, on account of COVID-19 pandemic, the verified applications were received towards the end of financial year or in the beginning of next financial year because of which funds to all eligible students could not be released within the year. Besides funds could not be released due to non-receipt of sufficient applications in SC, ST category and from North East Region (NER) in proportion to the funds allocated under these Heads."

4.5 On being asked about the criterion adopted for calculating Budget estimates and reasons for drastically reducing the proposed budgetary allocation for scholarship schemes for the financial year 2022-23 to ₹105 crore, the Department submitted in their in written reply that:-

"The parameters factored in calculating the Budgetary Estimates are-actual expenditure during the preceding year; number of applications/scholarship released under all the Scholarship Schemes during previous year; average expenditure of last three years + 10% increase over the same etc.

Budget Estimate for 2022-23 (₹105 crore) has been reduced in view of cap/ceiling imposed on total allocation (2021-22 to 2025-26) by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) keeping it at 5.5 times of the actual expenditure incurred in 2019-20 while appraising the Scheme for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26. The 5 year allocation to various scholarship schemes has been kept at ₹560 crores, the average of which comes to ₹112 crore. Further, for the year 2021-22, an enhanced BE of ₹125 crore was allocated under Scholarship schemes as there was a committed liability of ₹35 crore on account of payment to 17,167 leftover beneficiaries of Post-matric scholarship scheme for the year 2020-21. This enhanced allocation was given to break the cycle of leftover cases/pending payments of previous years. As a result of enhanced allocation in 2021-22, the allocation for 2022-23 has been reduced based on the premise that no payments to leftover students of 2021-22 will be made in 2022-23."

4.6 With regard to the notional allocation made under each scheme after they have been brought under umbrella scheme and mechanism adopted to ensure that the

desired objectives of each Scheme are achieved, the Department in written note stated that:-

"Notional allocation is not made under each scholarship scheme, since all the schemes were merged under an umbrella scheme w.e.f. 01.04.2018. The merger has enabled utilization of surplus funds in one component for the other. However, to avoid the extreme situation where a major chunk of the budget allocation gets consumed by only one segment of the scheme leaving little funds for others, a provision has been kept in the scheme that the utilisation of funds for a segment shall vary from a minimum of 5% to a maximum of 50% of the total budget allocation for the entire scheme. In addition, awareness regarding these schemes is raised through advertisement in Print/Electronic/Social media along with regular VCs with representatives of States/UTs Administrations."

4.7 On being further enquired about the shortfall in achieving the stagnant targets fixed under scholarship schemes since 2019-20 under various Schemes, the Department submitted in their written reply that:

"the targets fixed in terms of maximum beneficiaries under each of the schemes remained unchanged due to non-receipt of finally verified applications from States/UTs governments. Although there was a shortfall in achieving the target under Post-matric during the year 2020-21, in the year 2021-22, it is a complete turnaround as the number of finally verified applications received till date is 26,593 against fixed slots of 17,000 which is an increase of 100% in comparison to previous year. This was possible due to relentless efforts by the Department to create awareness through advertisement in Print/Electronic/Social media along with regular VCs with representatives of States/UTs Administrations."

4.8 With regard to inadequate number of proposals under free coaching and National Overseas Scholarship Schemes and remedial steps taken by the Department to create mass awareness about these schemes, the Department stated in written reply that-;

"Under Free Coaching scheme for student with disabilities, the proposals received till date for empanelment were found to be ineligible due to non-fulfilment of eligibility criteria of the scheme. The guidelines for empanelment were framed keeping in view the special needs of Divyangjan such as accessibility in infrastructure, course material etc. The private coaching institutes, which are already providing coaching to general candidates, seem to be reluctant to invest in making the infrastructure accessible to Divyangjan. Therefore, to mitigate this problem, Department has proposed Mode-II which has been approved and will be effective from 01/04/2022, whereby students

can directly apply to the Department for taking financial assistance for free coaching from the institutes which enjoy good reputation and have a good track record in providing coaching Pan-India. Under the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme, in the year 2019-20, 20-21 and 2021-22, the applications received in 2019-20 and the current year are more than the target slots of 20, but the number of candidates finally selected for award of scholarship was less in 2019-20 due to non-fulfillment of eligibility criteria:

Financial Year	No. of Applications received	Selected for award of scholarship
2019-20	48	7
2020-21	12	6
2021-22	7 applications received till July, 2021	5
	12 applications received after August, 2021	Screening Committee meeting to be convened soon.

As regards, action being taken to ensure maximum coverage, the application process is now open throughout the year and the value of solvency certificate has been reduced to ₹50,000/- compared to the value earlier (total amount to be spent by the Government on a particular student). Also, the Department held meetings with Principal Secretaries of all States/UTs with a view to generate large scale awareness about the features and benefits of the scheme in States/UTs. In addition to this, awareness is being generated through Social media/Advertisement in newspapers Pan-India."

4.9 On being enquired about the Department's inability to meet requisite targets under scholarship schemes during the deliberations with the Committee, the Secretary of the Department stated that:-

"हमारा इस साल का जो पोर्टल है, उसके बारे में हम आपको बताना चाहेंगे कि हमारे कितने स्लॉट्स हैं और हमारे पास कितनी एप्लीकेशन्स आई हैं। पहले यह होता था कि शायद हम हमारे स्लॉट्स पूरे नहीं कर पाते थे, लेकिन इस बार हम स्टेट के सहयोग से बार-बार वीसी करके यह एंशयोर किया कि वे सब बच्चे जो एलिजिबल हैं, वे एप्लाई जरूर करें। चाहे उनके नम्बर कम हो या ज्यादा हो, लेकिन अगर वे एलिजिबल हैं तो उन्हें कहीं से तो स्कॉलरशिप मिलनी चाहिए। कई बार बच्चों को महसूस होता है कि स्टेट गवर्नमेंट जो स्कीम चला रही है, वह यहां की स्कीम से बेटर है तो वे वहां के लिए एप्लाई कर देते हैं। हमारे पास इस साल जो डेटा आया है, जो कि एनएसपी से कंट्रोल होता है, उसमें हमारा कोई रोल नहीं है कि हम किसका रखेंगे या नहीं रखेंगे। जो यह सारा डेटाबेस है, इसके लिए एक एंड टू एंड प्रोग्राम है कि कैसे एप्लाई करता है, कौन वेरिफाई करता है, कौन सी इंस्टीट्यूट्स वेरिफाई होते हैं। "

4.10 Elaborating further on measures/steps taken by the Department to create awareness amongst persons with disabilities about various scholarship Schemes, the representative of the Department during deliberations with the Committee stated that:-

"जहां तक छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं का संबंध है, इस बार हमने इस दिशा में बहुत प्रयास किए हैं। हमारी जो प्रमुख छात्रवृत्तियां हैं – प्रीमेट्रिक छात्रवृत्ति, जो कक्षा नौ और दस के लिए है, पोस्टमेट्रिक छात्रवृत्ति, जो कक्षा 11 से लेकर पोस्ट ग्रेजुएशन, डिग्री-डिप्लोमा तक है तथा टॉप क्लास छात्रवृत्ति, ये तीनों ही नैशनल स्कॉलरशिप पोर्टल के माध्यम से चलाई जाती हैं। हमारे पास ये सारे आवेदन राज्यों से आते हैं, इसलिए हमने राज्यों में जो स्टेट नोडल अधिकारी हैं तथा जो उनके प्रमुख सचिव हैं, जो स्कॉलरशिप से डील कर रहे हैं, उनके साथ सेक्रेट्री महोदय ने बहुत सारी वीसीज़ कीं, उनके नीचे जॉइंट सेक्रेट्री लेवल पर भी ये वीसीज़ हुईं, जिसकी वजह से इस बार जो आवेदन हुए, उनकी संख्या बहुत बढ़ गई।

अभी तक हमारे पास छात्रवृत्ति के जो स्लॉट्स होते थे, उसके मुकाबले आवेदन बहुत कम आते थे। इस बार जो पोस्ट मेट्रिक छात्रवृत्ति है, जो सबसे पॉपुलर छात्रवृत्ति है, जिसमें कुल 17 हजार टोटल स्लॉट्स हैं, इस बार उन 17 हजार स्लॉट्स के मुकाबले इस बार कुल मिलाकर 28,087 एप्लीकेशंस हैं, जो सटेट्स के द्वारा सत्यापित की जा चुकी हैं। इसका मतलब जो टोटल एप्लीकेशंस थीं, वे इससे काफी ज्यादा थीं। जो एप्लीकेशंस सत्यापित की गई हैं, वेरिफाय की गई हैं, वे एप्लीकेशंस स्लॉट्स के मुकाबले करीब-करीब ड्योडे से भी ज्यादा हैं। इसी तरह जो टॉप क्लास छात्रवृत्ति है, जो छात्रवृत्ति टॉप क्लास के संस्थानों जैसे आईआईटी है, ट्रिपल आईटी है, उसमें कुल 300 स्लॉट्स होते हैं। इस बार कुल 436 एप्लीकेशंस सत्यापित, वैरिफाय होकर हमारे पास आ चुकी हैं।

इस बार जो प्रयास किया गया, इन छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं को बच्चों तक पहुंचाने के लिए, इसमें हमने राज्य सरकारों के साथ जो प्रयास किए, जो कंबाइंड एफर्ट्स किए, उसके बहुत अच्छे नतीजे आए हैं। अब सारी एप्लीकेशंस स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स के थ्रू वैरिफाय होकर हमारे पास आ रही हैं। अब फरवरी के जो 15 दिन हैं और इसके बाद मार्च में सारे बच्चों को डीबीटी के माध्यम से उनके बैंक अकाउंट में यह पैसा चला जाएगा।"

4.11 On being enquired about the provision for submission of off-line applications for these scholarship schemes or any complaint regarding inconveniences faced by the differently abled people with regard to accessibility to NSP has been received by the Department, the Secretary, DEPwD submitted as follows:-

"आपके सुझाव को मैंने नोट कर लिया है, लेकिन इसमें हमारे हाथ में कुछ नहीं है। कोई कम्प्लेंट नहीं आई है, क्योंकि यह एंड टू एंड सोल्यूशन है और इसके अंदर रेक्टिफाई करके हम यह कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि किसी गलत लाभार्थी के पास पैसा न जाए। सही लाभार्थी को, सही जगह डीबीटी के थ्रू पैसा पहुंचे।"

4.12 As regards to the reasons for receiving inadequate proposals on NSP portal during the last three years and initiatives taken to ensure that targeted number of proposals are received on NSP portal, the Department in written reply submitted that :

"One of the possible reasons for receipt of inadequate applications from students is that many State Governments have their own scholarship schemes which are found more beneficial by students. Also due to COVID-19 pandemic, Schools/colleges/institutions were closed for most part of the year which resulted in less number of applications on NSP portal. To ensure receipt of adequate applications in respect of Scholarship Schemes for Students with Disabilities, the Department has issued advertisement in leading Newspapers across the country to raise awareness of these schemes amongst students and other stakeholders. All other types of media are also being tapped for spreading awareness. The Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries of various States have been requested to popularize these Schemes in their respective States/UTs. The result of the measures adopted is encouraging as evidenced by the increased number of applications in Pre-matric, Post-matric & Top-Class Education scholarship schemes."

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.

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 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.

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.

CHAPTER - V

CENTRE FOR DISABILITY SPORTS (CDS)

The Centre for Disability Sports (CDS) was announced in the Budget Speech of 2014-15. The Centres are to be established in different zones of the country to inter-alia provide Persons with Disabilities the training facilities at par with the latest in the world so as to enable them to effectively compete and win medals in Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics and other International events for Sportspersons with Disabilities. Two such Centers at Gwalior and Shillong were recommended by the 11th Finance Commission in 2018.

5.2 One centre at Gwalior was approved by the Cabinet in 2019 with estimated cost of ₹170.99 crore. The work order for the project was issued to CPWD on 6th May 2019 and the funds to the tune of ₹15.07 crore was released to CPWD during 2019-20 ₹18.93 crore during 2020-21 and ₹39.80 crore during 2021-22. The foundation stone of the Centre was laid on 25th September, 2020 and the construction work of the Centre is underway which is likely to be completed in June, 2022. The DPR for the Shillong Centre has been prepared. As per the DPR, the estimated non-recurring cost of the project is ₹241.06 crore. The CEE/PIB Memorandum has been circulated and comments from concerned Ministries/Department are being obtained for further processing of this proposal. BE, RE and Actual expenditure for 2019-20 2020-21, 2021-22 and along with BE for 2011-23 is as follows:

Year	Budget Allocation (₹ in crore)	Revised Allocation (₹ in crore)	Actual Expenditure (₹ in crore)
2019-20	17.00	17.00	15.07
2020-21	100.00	19.50	18.93
2021-22	53.41	40.00	0.00 (upto 25.01.2022)
2022-23	60.00	-	-

5.3 Since considerable time elapsed after the project was sanctioned by the Government of India, the Committee enquired about the current status of Center being built at Gwalior, to which the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"The Department is making all possible efforts to get the ongoing work in respect of Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior completed at the earliest. CPWD has been engaged as the executing agency for undertaking the civil, mechanical and electrical works on turnkey basis. The ongoing work is likely to be completed by June, 2022. Progress of the project Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior is being monitored regularly by Secretary, DEPwD. Recently, the Project Monitoring Committee meeting was held on 14th January, 2022 wherein progress of the project was reviewed in terms of construction of building and specifications of essential equipment/furniture with financial implications for making the Centre operational for training purposes. "

5.4 During the evidence with the Department, the Secretary added that:-

"सेंटर फॉर डिसेबिलिटी स्पोर्ट्स है, दिव्यांगता खेल केंद्र, यह पहला केंद्र ग्वालियर में आ रहा है। इसमें सीपीडब्ल्यूडी के द्वारा कंस्ट्रक्शन चल रहा है। इसमें करीब 39.80 करोड़ का इस बार का आरई था और 40 करोड़ हमारा रिलीज हो गया है। "

5.5 On being enquired about the Centre for disability sports proposed to be set up in the country and the timelines set up to finish the work, the Department inter-alia submitted in their written reply that:-

"XII Plan working group on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in its report, recommended establishment of the Centre for Disability Sports. The project was included in the XII plan and was also a part of the Budget Speech of 2014-15. Taking it further, 5 Centers for Disability Sports were proposed to be established in five zones of the country, viz., Gwalior in the Central Zone, Shillong in the Eastern Zone, Zirakhpur, Punjab in the Northern Zone, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in the Southern Zone and one Centre at a place to be identified in the Western Zone. The proposal of the Department was considered by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) in its meeting held on 31.10.2018.

5.6 Since no Centre for Disability Sports has been made functional till date, the Committee enquired the alternative available with the disabled persons, to which the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"At present, no dedicated sports training facilities for Divyangjan exist in this Department. This void is being filled up by setting up of the Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior with state of the art training facilities."

5.7 As regards to the monitoring mechanism available with the Department to meet the targets fixed, the Committee were informed vide written reply that:-

"A Project Monitoring Committee under the chairpersonship of the Secretary has been constituted which is regularly monitoring the progress of the project. Last meeting of the PMC was held on 14th January, 2022. In addition, the Governing Body of the society of CDS, Gwalior which is also chaired by Secretary, DEPwD reviews the progress of the project. Further, Secretary, DEPwD is taking regular review meetings

with the officials of CPWD as a result of which it is expected that the construction of the project will be completed in June, 2022 and the Centre will start functioning immediately thereafter"

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.

CHAPTER - VI

NATIONAL HANDICAPPED FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFDC) is a not for profit company incorporated on 24th January, 1997 under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956(section 8 of companies Act, 2013), working as an Apex Corporation for the benefit of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)/Divyangjan. The Objectives of NHFDC is as follows:-

- (i) To promote self-employment and other ventures for the benefit / economic rehabilitation of the Divyangjan.
- ii) To assist, subject to such income and/or economic criteria as may be prescribed by the Government from time to time, Divyangjan or groups of Divyang individuals by way of loans and advances for economically and financially viable schemes and projects. To extend loans to Divyangjan for pursuing general/professional/technical education for training at graduate and higher levels.
- iii) To assist in the up gradation of technical and entrepreneurial skills of Divyangjan for proper and efficient management of production units.
- iv) To facilitate inclusion and comfortable living in the society for the Divyangjan
- v) To set up training, quality control, process development, technology, common facility centres and other infrastructural activities for the proper rehabilitation/upliftment of the Divyangjan in support of their economic pursuits.
- vi) To assist the State level organizations to deal with the development of the Divyangjan by way of providing financial assistance and in obtaining commercial funding or by way of refinancing.
- vii) To function as an apex institution for channelizing the fund to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) through the Implementing Agencies nominated by the State Government(s), partner banks & Financial Institutions and other state level institutions with whom agreements are signed”.

6.2 NHFDC is wholly owned by Government of India and has an authorized share capital of ₹499.50 crore and paid up share capital of ₹399.99 crore. The main objectives of the Corporation are to promote economic developmental activities for the benefit of the PwDs and to extend loans to the PwDs for self-employment and higher

education etc. BE, RE, AE during the last three years alongwith BE for 2022-23 is as under:-

Year	Budget Allocation (₹ in Crore)	Revised Allocation (₹ in Crore)	Actual Expenditure (₹ in Crore)
2019-20	41.21	0.92	0.92
2020-21	0.01	0.00	0.00
2021-22	0.01	0.00	0.00
2022-23	0.01	-	-

6.3 The Committee were informed that there was no fixed target under the scheme. The details of physical and financial achievements of NHFDC under loan scheme for last three years is as follows:-

Year	Amount Released (₹ in Crore)	Number of Beneficiaries
2019-20	113.15	18170
2020-21	133.62	18326
2021-22 (upto 31.12.2021)	73.01	10296

6.4 On being enquired about the reasons for reducing allocation from ₹41.21 crore in 2019-20 to 0.01 crore in 2021-22, the representatives of DEPwD stated during the course of deliberation that:-

"यह हमारा सेंट्रल पब्लिक सेक्टर एंटरप्राइज एनएचएफडीसी है उसमें हम इक्विटी सपोर्ट देते हैं। इसकी हमें जो अप्रूवल मिली थी, वह 400 करोड़ रुपये की थी और हम उसे पूरा दे चुके हैं। इसके बाद वित्त मंत्रालय में वर्ष 2020-21 में गए थे तो उन्होंने कहा कि इस साल हम किसी भी नए सीपीएससी को इक्विटी एनहांस नहीं करेंगे। वर्ष 2020-21 का कोई प्रस्ताव उन्होंने नहीं माना और वर्ष 2021-22 में भी कोई प्रस्ताव किसी भी मंत्रालय का नहीं माना है। पहले बजट में जो इक्विटी सपोर्ट रखते थे, उसका प्रावधान नहीं रखा है।"

6.5 With regard to the monitoring system and control over the functioning of NHFDC, the Department in their background note submitted that:-

"NHFDC has the following internal mechanisms in place for monitoring the implementation of its schemes & programmes:

- i) The funds made available to implementing agencies are to be utilised within a period of 90 days from the date of release. The implementing

agencies are required to submit the utilization details in respect of the amount released.

- ii) NHFDC regularly organizes National and Regional conferences/workshops of its Implementing Agencies. The performance in respect of implementation of NHFDC schemes is reviewed at such conference/workshops. The bottlenecks in implementation of the schemes of NHFDC in respective states are also discussed and evaluated. On the basis of discussions, policies are suitably modified within the ambit of the objectives of NHFDC.
- iii) The implementation of NHFDC schemes by various Implementing Agencies is reviewed/ monitored regularly and suitable measures are taken for effective implementation of the schemes."

6.6 During the deliberations with the Department with regard to the reasons for refusal by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) for increasing equity support to NHFDC, the representative of DePwD informed that:-

"उन्होंने कोविड की स्थिति की बात कही। यह बात मंत्रालय में लिखित में आई कि कोई इक्विटी सपोर्ट नहीं देंगे। "

6.7 In the absence of enhancement in equity, representative of the Department submitted with regard to its effect on the functioning of NHDFC that:-

"सरकार से हमें जो ग्रांट मिलती है और एनएचएफडीसी ने अपना जो प्रोफिट कमाया होगा, उसका उपयोग करते हैं। हमें तीन साल में ग्रांट कम मिली है। उससे हमारी लोन एक्टिविटी सफर नहीं हुई है। हमने पिछले फाइनेंशियल ईयर में 115 करोड़ रुपये का लोन बांटा था। इस साल 140 करोड़ रुपये का लोन बांटेंगे। ग्रांट्स कम होने के बावजूद भी लोन देने में कमी नहीं आई है।"

6.8 The Department submitted that the Corporation has taken following initiatives to extend the outreach:

(i) NHFDC Swavalamban Kendra

- (a) NHFDC has rolled out the concept of NHFDC Swavalamban Kendra (NSK) by converging the credit needs, skilling needs, assured business linkage needs, etc on pilot scale basis and aspires to convert into a grandiose scheme, initially covering each district in the country at the rate of one NSK per district. Each NSK is established at a capital cost of around Rs. 12.0 lakhs by PwD entrepreneurs with the help of 100% financing from NHFDC.
- (b) In order to provide hand holding support as well as assured business linkage/ business support, NHFDC conducts skilling programmes through these NSKs. Attempts also being made to initiate Common Services Centre (CSC) activities/organise retail formats/captive production centres for items like – Bags, Face Masks, foot mats, agarbatti etc based on scoping exercise for each site. The NSKs will also function as Micro Finance Lending sites for NHFDC schemes.
- (c) These NSKs will be used as mini incubation centers with hands

on skilling on the locally relevant and viable businesses to train the rural PwDs for self-employment opportunities in and around their localities.

- (d) The corporation has already established 14 NSKs at Baghpat, Noida, Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh), Yamunanagar, Sonapat, Kurukshetra (Haryana), Chindwara, Indore, Nagda (M.P.), Bhilwara, Dausa (Rajasthan), Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand) and Nayagarh (Odisha). In all above NSKs skill trainings of PwDs are being conducted successfully. These NSKs are fitted with CCTV, Biometric machine, laptops/other equipment for every trainee, and are easily accessible to PwDs including the toilets.

(ii) Online Marketing of Products of PwD Entrepreneurs:

Providing hand holding support to PwD entrepreneurs in marketing their products is an important aspect in the process of effort of their economic empowerment through concessional loaning. As the PwD entrepreneurs with their mobility/communication limitations, may sometimes find it difficult to market their products and services. NHFDC has initiated efforts to directly support the PwD entrepreneurs in marketing their goods and services by aggregation of their products and services, and also using existing online marketing platform. Some of the products made by PwDs are now available on leading e- marketing platforms [Amazon, Flipkart, Gemetc].

(iii) Enhancing the reach of the Corporation:

In order to enhance its reach, the Corporation signed agreements with new State Nominated Agencies and Regional Rural Banks. During the year NHFDC signed agreements with Gujarat State Handicapped (Divyang) Finance & Development Corporation, Gujarat and Tripura Grameen Bank, Tripura. Similar efforts are

(iv) Monitoring System of the Implementation of the Schemes & Programs of NHFDC In The State/UTs: NHFDC has following internal mechanisms in place for monitoring the implementation of its schemes & programme:

- (a) Utilization of loan: The funds made available to implementing agencies are to be utilised within prescribed period from the date of its release. The implementing agencies are required to submit the utilization details in respect of the amount released.
- (b) National and Regional conferences/workshops: NHFDC regularly organizes National and Regional conferences/workshops of its Implementing Agencies. The performance in respect of implementation of NHFDC schemes is reviewed at such conference/workshops. The bottlenecks in implementation of schemes of NHFDC in respective states are also discussed and evaluated. On the basis of discussions, policies are suitably modified within the ambit of objectives of NHFDC.
- (c) Internal Review Meeting: The implementation of NHFDC schemes by various Implementing Agencies is reviewed /monitored regularly and suitable measures are taken for effective implementation of the schemes.

(v) Skill Training Centres

- (a) NHFDC is stressing on the skill training of Divyangjan and has been facilitating their EDP/skill training primarily from its skill training centres at Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh) and Micro Skilling Centres in the name of NHFDC Swavalamban Kendras at Baghpat, Noida, Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh), Yamunanagar, Sonapat, Kurukshetra (Haryana), Chindwara, Indore, Nagda (M.P.), Bhilwara (Rajasthan) and Nayagarh (Odisha). NHFDC has initiated skill training of 7810 PwDs under SIPDA Scheme of DEPwD, primarily through above centres.
- (b) NHFDC has taken steps to open its own skill training centres at various locations in the country with the support of 21 NCSCDA, Ministry of Labour & Employment, GoI. This will ensure use of strength of both the organizations in extending quality skill training to PwDs for their wage employment or self employment.

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

CHAPTER - VII

ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED PERSONS FOR PURCHASE/FITTING OF AIDS/APPLIANCES (ADIP)

The main objective of the Scheme is to provide grants-in-aid to the 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) to assist needy persons with disabilities in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances to promote physical, social and psychological rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities through reducing the effects of disabilities and at the same time enhancing their economic potential. 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 BE, RE and AE incurred alongwith BE for 2022-23 are as follows:

Year	BE (₹.in Crore)	RE (₹.in Crore)	AE(₹.in Crore)
2019-20	230.00	222.50	213.83
2020-21	230.00	195.00	189.13
2021-22	220.00	180.00	121.48 (Upto 25.01.2022)
2022-23	235.00	-	-

7.2 The physical targets and achievement under the Scheme during 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 and targets for 2022-23 is as follows:

Sl. No	Name of the Scheme/ Project/ Programme	Physical Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical Target	Achievement (upto 25.01.2022)	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Physical Target
		2019-20			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23
2.	Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/ Fitting of Aids/ Appliances (ADIP)	3.00 lakhs beneficiaries	3.51 lakhs beneficiaries	Exceeded the target	3.00 lakhs beneficiaries	2.58 lakhs	Due to impact of Covid-19 pandemic throughout the year, target could not be achieved	2.00 lakh beneficiaries	1.71 lakh beneficiaries	The target will be achieved by 31.03.2022.	2.05 lakh beneficiaries

7.3. On being enquired about the reasons due to which allocation was reduced during each of the last three years and for not being able to spend the Revised Estimates, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"The budget allocation for 2019-20 was Rs.230.00 crore which was more than the budget allocation of 2018-19 by Rs.10.00 crore. As regards less utilization of Revised Estimate, it is submitted that against the RE allocation of Rs.222.50 crore, an amount of Rs.213.83 crore which represents 96% of the allocation was spent during the year. The entire RE allocation could not be utilized due to the fact that sufficient camps could not be held due to imposition of model code of conduct on account General Elections. Further, due to COVID-19 pandemic, funds could not be released towards the end of the year as distribution of aids and assistive devices was not possible in March, 2020.

As regards 2020-21, the budget allocation was Rs.230.00 crore hence, there was no reduction as compared to the budget allocation during 2019-20. The RE allocation for 2020-21 was Rs.195.00 crore out of which Rs.189.13 crore was released which is approximately 97% of RE allocation. The remaining funds could not be utilized as 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 keeping in view the COVID 19 guidelines. 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, the entire RE allocation could not be released.

For the financial year 2021-22, the budget allocation was reduced slightly i.e. from 230.00 crore during previous year to Rs.220.00 crore due to uncertainty of holding of camps due to COVID-19 pandemic. As regards, RE allocation, as per the recommendations of Expenditure Finance Committee the total financial outlay for 5 years i.e. from 2021-22 to 2025-26 has been frozen at Rs.1176.00 crore. Keeping the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on holding of distribution camps and Cochlear Implant Surgeries in the first quarter of the year, the RE allocation was fixed at Rs.180.00 crore. Out of the total RE allocation, funds amounting to Rs.147.30 crore which represent 82% of the RE allocation have already been released. As sufficient proposals are under process and the camps are also being organized following the SOP, the entire RE allocation during 2021-22 will be utilized by 31.3.2022."

7.4 On being asked about the criteria fixed to allocate funds amongst various implementing agencies i.e. National Institutes / ALIMCO/ DDRCs/ State Handicapped Development Corporation and other local bodies, the Department submitted in their written reply stated that:-

"Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), a CPSE of this Department and National Institutes/Composite Regional Centres which are autonomous bodies under this Department, are the major implementing agencies having PAN India operations. Almost 95 - 96% of allocated budget

under the scheme is released to these organizations. The following points are factored in for allocation of funds to various implementing agencies:-

- (i) Number of beneficiaries proposed to be covered, requirement of funds mentioned in the proposal and unspent balances, if any.
- (ii) Trend of utilization of funds by implementing agencies during previous years.

In case of a new proposal of NGO/VO, the quantum of grants-in-aid is recommended by the Screening Committee constituted in the Department taking into account the capacity of the organization to implement the scheme."

7.5 On being enquired about the reasons for reducing target fixed for 2021-22 and 2022-23 in comparison to 2020-21 and 2019-20, the Department *inter alia* stated in their written reply 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 for 2021-22. 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 Rs.10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/-. In case of Motorized Tricycle, the subsidy has been increased from Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 50,000/- and amount of admissible grant under Cochlear Implant Program has also been enhanced from Rs.6.00 Lakh per unit to Rs.7.00 Lakh per unit for pre-lingual hearing impaired children which would result in coverage of less number of beneficiaries out of the allocated fund by the EFC. As on 31.01.2022, the number of beneficiaries covered is 1.95 Lakh which represents 97% of the target beneficiaries of Rs.2.00 Lakh. Hence, the target will be fully achieved upto 31.03.2022."

7.6 With regard to the physical target fixed for the implementing agencies with regard to assistance to disabled persons for purchase / fitting of aids/ Appliances along with the achievements made against the target fixed by each Implementing agency, the Department *inter-alia* stated in their written reply that:-

"No specific target fixed for any implementing agency. Funds are released to implementing agencies based on their performance and requirement of funds. In so far as achieving the target is concerned, the financial target (budgetary allocation) and the physical target (number of beneficiaries covered) fixed for the entire scheme are achieved on the basis of cumulative efforts of all the implementing agencies."

7.7 On being enquired the reasons for keeping 40 per cent disability criteria to avail the benefits under the scheme, the Secretary, DEPwD stated that:-

"इसका प्रापर नोटिफिकेशन है कि कितनी दिव्यांगता पर कितनी परसेंटेज होती है। एक्ट के मुताबिक जिसकी दिव्यांगता 40 परसेंट या अधिक हो, इसके साथ इनकम लैवल क्राइटेरिया भी होता है, ये दोनों क्राइटेरिया मीटआउट होते हैं तो उस पर्सन को असिस्टेंस दी जाती है। पहले असेसमेंट होगा। असेसमेंट को तिथी लोकल डिस्ट्रिक्ट मजिस्ट्रेट सुविधा अनुसार देते हैं। वहां एलिमको के प्रोफेशनल जाते हैं, सबका रजिस्ट्रेशन होता है। उस इलाके में प्रॉपर पब्लिसिटी की जाती है। इसके बाद असेसमेंट होता है और कैम्प मोड में डिस्ट्रीब्यूट किया जाता है। हम इसे प्रियारिटी पर रखेंगे।"

7.8 As regard to the income criteria, the representative of the Department during the deliberations with the Committee informed that:-

" जहां तक इनकम की बात है, आय के लिए कोई न कोई प्रूफ डिस्ट्रिक्ट एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन प्रोवाइड करता है, उसके बेस पर आय देखी जाती है। आय फैमिली इनकम मानी जाती है। अगर आय 15,000 रुपये महीना यानी 1,80,000 सालाना से कम है तभी 100 प्रतिशत सब्सिडी एडिप स्कीम के अंतर्गत मिलती है। अगर आय 1,80,000 से 2,40,000 के बीच में है तो 50 प्रतिशत सब्सिडी मिलती है। इसके ऊपर नहीं मिलती है।"

7.9 When the Committee expressed their unhappiness about income being an important criteria for distribution of equipments, the Secretary stated during deliberations that:-

"हमें इसमें इनकम लिमिट इसलिए देखनी पड़ती है, क्योंकि हमारे पास बजट बहुत लिमिटेड होता है। हमारा अगले चार साल के लिए अमाउंट फिक्स कर दिया गया है कि आपको इस स्कीम के तहत इतना ही फंड मिलेगा और उस स्कीम के तहत आपको जो शोध करना है, उस लिमिट के अन्दर रहकर कर सकते हैं। यह हमारे लिए फाइनेंस का एक लिमिटेशन है। इसलिए हम सबसे नीचे से शुरूआत करते हैं। इन दो चीजों को रखने के लिए किसी भी स्कीम में यह ब्रॉड लिमिटेशन आ जाती है।"

7.10 When asked about the provision for providing financial assistance to PwDs living below the poverty line by the Department, the Secretary submitted that:-

"मैं आपको जानकारी देना चाहूंगी कि दिव्यांगजनों को पेंशन देने की स्कीम ग्रामीण विकास विभाग में है। हमारे विभाग में यह स्कीम नहीं है। सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से जो पेंशन दी जाती है, वह ग्रामीण विकास विभाग की तरफ से दी जाती है।"

7.11 On the issue of disability pension for PwDs, the Department submitted in their written reply that:

“The Ministry of Rural Development under its National Social Assistance Programme provides pension to senior citizens, widows and Divyangjan. At present, it provides disability pension @₹ 300/- per month per person with disabilities aged 18-79 years with severe or multiple disabilities (disability of 80% or more) and belonging to family living below poverty line as per the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India under Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) of NSAP. On reaching the age of 80 years, the beneficiaries are paid enhanced central assistance of ₹500/- per month. The States/UTs are also topping-up on central assistance.”

7.12 On being asked about the taking up the matter of enhancement of pension with the Ministry of Rural Development and State Governments, the Department submitted as under:

“The issue of increase in the quantum of disability pension, dispensing with the disability percentage/age/income were also raised earlier by the Department related Parliament Standing Committee and the same was taken up with M/o Rural Development. It was understood that M/o Rural Development had constituted task force in this regard and they are in the process of revising NSAP.”

7.13 On being enquired about the current cochlear implant being manufactured by DRDO, results of its trials and when can it be expected to be available for general public, Secretary stated that:-

"में कॉकलियर इंप्लांट के बारे में यह कहना चाहूंगी कि अभी कॉकलियर इंप्लांट को इम्पोर्ट किया जाता है। डीआरडीओ की तरफ से एक इनिशिएटिव लिया गया था कि हम इसको इंडिजिनस्ली डेवलप करेंगे। उसको डेवलप किया गया और 6 लोगों के ऊपर उसे ट्रायल के तौर पर चलाया गया। मुझे अभी बताया गया है कि उसमें से एक ट्रायल सक्सेसफुल नहीं हो पाया। मैडम, उसका प्रोटोटाइप प्रोडक्शन के लिए अप्रूव नहीं किया गया है। इसलिए अभी हमारा डीआरडीओ की तरफ ही ध्यान है।"

7.14 As regards to the sufficiency of funds allocated for 2022-23 to achieve the target fixed for the upcoming financial year along with the modus operandi of the Department for achieving the target, the Department submitted in their written reply that:-

"During the appraisal and approval of the of ADIP Scheme, EFC reduced the budget allocation from Rs.1240.00 crore to Rs.1176.00 crore for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26. Hence, during 2022-23, an amount of Rs.235.00 crore has been allocated under the ADIP Scheme. A target of 2.00 Lakh beneficiaries has been envisaged for 2022-23 which would be covered out of the allocated fund. The following is the proposed action plan to utilize the entire allocated fund for the year 2022-23:-

Activity	Funds allocated	Number of beneficiaries to
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	(₹ in crore)	be covered
Camp/Headquarter Activity	162.00	163000
ADIP-SSA	40.00	36500
Cochlear Implant	33.00	500
Total	235.00	200000

7.15 With regard to the monitoring mechanism available with the Department to achieve the target and the performance of ADIP Scheme, the Department submitted that:-

- i) The ADIP Scheme is on DBT Bharat Portal. Under ADIP Scheme, the grants are released on recommendations of the concerned State Govt. upon receipt of an Inspection Report with regard to a particular implementing agency. The recommending authority also conducts 10% and 15% test check/ sample checking of assisted beneficiaries from the previous grant to the organization.
- ii) The organizations have to furnish audited utilization certificates in time in respect of the previous grant (s).
- iii) Implementing agencies are required to maintain a website and upload details of grants received under ADIP Scheme, grants utilized and list of beneficiaries alongwith photo and Ration Card Number/voter ID Number/Adhaar Card Number, as the case may be.
- iv) Proposals of NGOs are being received and processed online.
- v) Mandatory Registration of NGOs on NITI Aayog Portal (NGO Darpan).
- vi) Utilization of grants-in-aid through EAT (Expenditure Advance Transfer) Module of PFMS."

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 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.

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.

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 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 fulfil their basic needs.

NEW DELHI;

**22 March, 2022
01 Chaitra, 1944 (Saka)**

RAMA DEVI

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

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2021-22) (DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)) HELD ON FRIDAY, THE 18TH FEBRUARY, 2022

The Committee met from 1100 hrs. to 1315 hrs. in Committee Room No. '3', Parliament House Annexe Extension Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Thomas Chazhikadan
3. Shri Chhatar Singh Darbar
4. Shri Y.Devendrappa
5. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
6. Shri Vijay Kumar
7. Shri Tokheho Yephthomi

Rajya Sabha

8. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
9. Smt. Ramilaben Bara
10. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
11. Smt. Chhaya Verma
12. Shri Ramkumar Verma

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Anita B. Panda | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Mamta Kemwal | - | Director |
| 3. | Shri Krishendra Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

WITNESSES

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Ms. Anjali Bhawra | Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Sanjay Pandey | Joint Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary and other officers representing the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to the sitting of the Committee convened to discuss 'Demands for Grants for 2022-23' of the Department. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson drew attention of the representatives of the Department to various ongoing welfare schemes meant for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. She expressed concern about under/non-utilisation of funds allocated on various schemes and execution of work relating to establishment of District Disability Rehabilitation Center (DDRCs), Sports Centres for disabled persons at Gwalior etc.

3. The Chairperson then drew attention of the representatives of the Department to Direction 55 (1) of the 'Directions by the Speaker of Lok Sabha' about maintaining confidentiality of the proceedings of the Committee until the report is presented to the House. Thereupon, Chairperson requested the Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) to introduce other Officers and to brief the Committee about the performance of the Department and proposals for financial year 2022-23.

4. Accordingly, the Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), briefed the Committee through power point presentation highlighting the performance of the Department during the financial year 2021-22 and proposals for financial year 2022-23.

5. The Committee, thereafter, *inter alia* deliberated on the following issues:

- (i) Budgetary allocation, expenditure and shortfall in expenditure etc. for the financial year 2021-22 and budgetary estimation regarding financial year 2022-23.
- (ii) Disbursement of Scholarship amounts to students with disabilities under various schemes;
- (iii) Setting up of District Disability Rehabilitation Centres under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS);
- (iv) Establishment of Sports Centres for persons with disabilities;
- (v) Implementation of the Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP);

- (vi) Strengthening of National Institutes and promotion of research on disability related technology, products etc;
- (vii) Role of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC);
- (viii) Appropriate publicity of the schemes of the Department to enhance awareness among the persons with disabilities;

6. The Chairperson, then thanked the Secretary and other representatives of the Department for providing valuable information on the subject and also asked the Secretary to furnish written replies on the issues that remained unanswered during the sitting.

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 NINTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2021-22) HELD ON TUESDAY, 22nd MARCH, 2022

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

PRESENT

SMT. RAMA DEVI - CHAIRPERSON

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Sangeeta Azad
3. Shri Bholanath B.P. Saroj
4. Shri Abdul Khaleque
5. Smt. Ranjeeta Koli
6. Smt. Geeta Kora
7. Smt. Supriya Sule

RAJYA SABHA

8. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
9. Smt. Ramilaben Bara
10. Shri Abir Ranjan Biswas
11. Smt. Geeta alias Chandraprabha
12. Shri Narayan Koragappa
13. Shri Ramkumar Verma

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Anita B. Panda - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Mamta Kemwal - Director
3. 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) xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx

(ii) Thirty-second Report on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) and

(iii) xxxx xxxx xxxx xxxx.

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. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the 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.

4. Before the conclusion of the Meeting, some of the Members proposed to organize study tour of the Committee after the Budget Session. The Chairperson consented to the proposal and directed to prepare viable study tour programme for her consideration and approval.

The Committee then adjourned.

xxxx Does not pertain to this Report.

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl.No	Para No.	Observations/ Recommendations
1	2.9	<p>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.</p>
2.	2.10	<p>The Committee find that the non-receipt of Utilisation Certificates from the State Governments has remained a</p>

		<p>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.</p>
3.	2.11	<p>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.</p>

4.	3.17	<p>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.</p>
5.	3.18	<p>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</p>

		269 Districts. The Committee would like to be apprised of the current status and measures being taken to achieve the targets.
6.	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.
7.	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.

8.	4.13	<p>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.</p>
9.	4.14	<p>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</p>

		<p>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.</p>
10.	4.15	<p>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.</p>
11.	5.8	<p>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</p>

		<p>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.</p>
12.	6.9	<p>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</p>
13.	7.16	<p>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</p>

		<p>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.</p>
14.	7.17	<p>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.</p>
15.	7.18	<p>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</p>

		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 fulfil their basic needs.
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