

**श्री मती कांति सिंह:** सर, जहां तक उन्हें रिजवेशन देने की बात है, जो वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त करने वाले बच्चे हैं, उनके लिए मेडिकल कालेज में दो सीटें आरक्षित की गई हैं और इंजिनियरिंग डिप्लोमा की डिग्री प्राप्त करने के लिए 3 सीटें उन्हें दी गई हैं। जिन लोगों के द्वारा अप्लिकेशंस दी जाती हैं, उन्हें कंसिडर किया जाता है। अभी तक जितने बच्चों ने अप्लिकेशन दिया हैं, उन्हें कंसिडर किया गया है। जो इलिजिबल ही नहीं होंगे, उन्हें यह कैसे दिया जा सकता है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, what is your supplementary?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I did not ask for it, Sir. ....(Interruptions)....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

\*628. [The questioners (Shri Abu Asim Azmi and Shri Amar Singh) were absent. For answer vide page 30].

\*629. [The questioners (Shri N.R. Govind Rajar) was absent. For answer vide page 31].

#### **Allocation for elderly persons**

\*630. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: ††

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of elderly persons, who need State support for their care and protection, is increasing year after year due to general improvement in health and life expectancy;

(b) if so, the reasons for allocating a meager amount of Rs. 18.79 crore under the Integrated Programme for Elder Persons Scheme for the year 2004-05;

(c) whether there is any proposal to enhance the allocation for the purpose; and

(d) the details of the services being provided to the elder persons?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) The absolute number of elder persons (60+ years) is increasing as per the Census data.

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Santosh Bagrodia.

[9 May, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) to (d) The objective of the Scheme "An Integrated Programme for Older Persons" is to provide financial assistance to Non Government Organisations for maintenance of old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare units and non institutional service centres. The budget allocation for the scheme has been increased over the years. The B.E. for 2005-06 has been enhanced by Rs. 2.94 crores over 2004-05.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, we know that population of old people is increasing day by day.

**श्री सभापति:** इसमें आपको क्या आपत्ति हैं ?

**श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया:** सर, मुझे इसलिए आपत्ति है कि मैं भी आप ही लोगों के साथ आ रहा हूँ।

**श्री सभापति:** तो आने दीजिए, हम आपका स्वागत करेंगे।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, we have about eight crore people in the country who are in the old age category. Some of them are quite capable and very healthy also. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether she would like to approach different Departments so that some facilities, like those, which are given to youth for self-employment, can be given to them. In this way, they can still be an asset to the society and no nuisance to the family.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, it is a very useful question that the hon. Member has asked. We have a National Policy for Older persons and under that policy there are a number of provisions. Apart from security, health and financial security, nutrition etc. there is also a provision for training and information and education. Now, this would lead to gainful employment. So, this is a part of the National Policy.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: My second supplementary is that the Government is giving facilities to these NGOs who are helping the old people. Do they monitor whether the NGOs are really helping the poor people who really deserve this or are they only helping those people who can probably afford this? Similarly, they should need safety net. Will the Government like to introduce compulsory community based insurance policy for that?

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, we have an institutionalised method in the Ministry of monitoring the work being carried out by NGOs to see whether the grant that we are giving to them is reaching the right people and the beneficiaries. We do have this system. Hon. Member has also

asked about insurance policy. We just had a debate in the Rajya Sabha which was initiated by hon. Member Dr. Karan Singhji, on this. Very valuable suggestions, including this suggestion, came up in the debate. We are looking into all these.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only old-age Members will be allowed to put questions.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, what is the age limit?

SHRI FALI S. NARIMAN: Sir, the question which Mr. Bagrodia has proposed is a very relevant one and is perhaps actually the subject of Private Members' Bill introduced by Dr. Karan Singh only last Friday. Therefore, I would request the Hon. Minister that since the number of elderly persons is increasing as per the Census data, will the Government give an assurance that they will have some policy or a commission on elderly persons like they have a Commission for Minorities and so on because that is the prime need. Besides, may I just request one more thing that I was very distressed to see and hear, two nights ago that homes for young children, Waifs and Strays, are being closed down in the entire State of Rajasthan only because they do not have the funds. Therefore, it is very important not only to provide funds but to see that these funds continue for a period of time. Otherwise, these homes will really become a burden to society. Will the hon. Minister kindly enlighten us on this?

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, hon. Member had participated in the debate we are referring to, which took place last Friday and this Bill had come up with the specific proposal of establishing a commission for older persons. But as far as giving commitment in the House is concerned, Sir, there are various aspects to it and it has to be examined. There has to be a collective decision in the Cabinet. I cannot make a commitment at this stage. Firstly, I cannot make a commitment at this stage. As I said, we are looking into it very positively.

Secondly, as far as the point on children homes is concerned, I would say that it is outside the ambit of the main question. If the hon. Member gives me a separate notice on this, I would, certainly, like to reply to it.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Sir, earlier the Government used to give maintenance grant to old age homes. Now, this grant has been stopped. Whether the hon. Minister can think of restarting this facility.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, we have a policy whereby we give grants to run old age homes and there is no reason why such grant should be

stopped, unless there is some kind of malpractice. If the hon. Member gives me specific cases, I would look into them.

DR. M.S. GILL: Sir, the hon. Minister is saying that she is looking into the matters. And, I don't agree with my friend, Mr. Nariman, for having a National Commission, because they will sit on it for ever and ever. The problem is very, very serious in urban and rural areas. I have seen horrible pictures of Brindavan widows on television that too at a religious place. Nobody looks after them. I have seen rural India. I have seen Punjab and Amritsar and the neglected old people. Would she consider going to the hon. Prime Minister, who is reasonably old and very compassionate, saying that this little grant of Rs. 18 crores, which embarrasses even State Governments, be increased to Rs. 100 crores? Every State should be given money to start 2, 3 or 4 old age homes, as well as widow homes, and make a start, and get on with the job. Would she give us some kind of an assurance, instead of having a Committee or a Commission?

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: Sir, there is a difference of opinion in the House itself. A certain section wants a Commission, and another section says that it does not want any Commission. So, we will, certainly, look into it.

So far as Brindavan widows are concerned, there is no doubt that their plight is deplorable. The condition is worse, or equally bad of Dalit old widows in rural areas. We are considering all these and we are positively inclined towards it.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, may I remind the House that at one stage the Rajya Sabha was known, informally, as the House of elders, although, there are some unreasonably young people like Mr. Jairam Ramesh or some other Members.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I dispute with this.

DR. KARAN SINGH: We had a very good debate on Friday on my Bill for a Commission for the aged. I am sure, if Shri Gill reads the debate, he will change his mind. I just want to know from the hon. Minister whether she would be taking my suggestion before the Cabinet and whether she would come, hopefully, in the next Session, with some concrete proposals regarding the aged.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: What the elders want cannot be ignored. So, as I said, we are very, very positively inclined towards it.