

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KRISHAN PAL): (a) and (b) The current annual income limit of creamy layer in OBC reservation is ₹ 6 lakhs per annum with effect from 16.05.2013. The parameter/ criteria fixed for revision of said annual income limit of creamy layer is Consumer Price Index.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no proposal to hike the annual income limit of creamy layer in OBC reservation.

#### **Facilities for senior citizens**

†1357. SHRI VIJAY GOEL:

SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

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

(a) whether the benefits/facilities being provided by various Ministries of the Government for the welfare of senior citizens of the country are satisfactory, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government gets complaints regarding deprivation of benefits/facilities provided to the senior citizens by various departments of the Ministries; and

(c) if so, the manner whereby such complaints are settled along with the report thereof for the last one year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI VIJAY SAMPLA): (a) to (c) The details of benefits/facilities provided by various Ministries of the Government to the senior citizens are given in Statement (*See below*).

As per information received from the Ministry of Rural Development, National Level Monitors and Officers of the Ministry conduct inspections about the implementation of schemes under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP). The irregularities in the implementation of schemes as and when received are forwarded to the concerned State/UT Governments for appropriate action.

Ministry of Railways has informed that a few references are received regarding

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

non-allotment of lower berths to senior citizens. In such cases, the position is clarified that lower berths are allotted to senior citizens automatically by the system on a first come first served basis, subject to availability of such berths.

Ministry of Civil Aviation has informed that the complaints received from senior citizens relating to aviation sector are not significant in number.

As far as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is concerned, the complaints regarding implementation of Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP), as and when received, are forwarded to the concerned State/UT Government for investigation and remedial action. However, no complaint regarding deprival of benefits/facilities has been received under this Programme during the last one year.

#### ***Statement***

*Facilities/Services being provided by various Ministries of the Government for the welfare of senior citizens of the country*

- **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** is implementing a Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) since 1992 with the objective of improving the quality of life of senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing. Under this Scheme, financial assistance (up to 95% in the case of States of Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim and North-Eastern States and 90% for rest of the country) is provided to Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations, Panchayati Raj Institutions etc. for maintenance of Old Age Homes, Respite Care Homes and Continuous Care Homes, Multi-service centres, mobile medicare units, Day care centres for Alzheimer's disease /Dementia patients, physiotherapy clinics for older persons etc. The Programme is mainly implemented through Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations.
- **Ministry of Rural Development** is administering National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP). Under NSAP, Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) is being implemented wherein central assistance is provided to persons of 60 years and above and belonging to family living below poverty line as per the criteria prescribed by the Government of India. Central assistance of ₹ 200/- per month is provided to person in the age group of 60-79 years and ₹ 500/- per month to persons of 80 years and above. Schemes under NSAP are implemented

by the State/UT Governments. Identification of beneficiaries and disbursement of pension/assistance is done by the State/UT Governments.

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** had launched the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) in 2010 to provide dedicated health care facilities to the elderly people through State health delivery system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including outreach services. Following facilities are being provided under the Programme:

- Geriatric OPD, 30 bedded Geriatric ward for in-patient care etc. at Regional Geriatric Centres. The Regional Geriatric Centres will also undertake PG Courses in Geriatric for developing Human Resource.
- Geriatric OPD and 10 bed Geriatric Ward at District Hospitals.
- Bi-weekly Geriatric Clinic at Community Health Centres (CHCs).
- Weekly Geriatric Clinic at Primary Health Centres (PHCs).
- Provision of Aids and Appliances at Sub-centres.

As on date, a total of 104 districts of 24 States/UTs and 8 Regional Geriatric Centres have been covered under the Programme. So far, 930 CHCs, 4439 PHCs and 28767 Sub-centres have been covered under the programme.

- **Ministry of Railways**

The following facilities have been extended by Ministry of Railways from time to time to senior citizens:

- As per rules, male Senior Citizens of minimum 60 years and lady Senior Citizens of minimum 58 years are granted concession in the basic fares of all classes of Mail/Express/Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Jan Shatabdi/Duronto group of trains. The element of concession is 40% for men and 50% for women.
- No proof of age is required at the time of purchasing tickets. However, they are required to carry some documentary proof as prescribed showing their age or date of birth and have to produce it if demanded by on-board ticket checking staff. Senior Citizens can book reserve tickets across the reservation counters as well as through internet.

- In the computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS), there is a provision to allot lower berths to Senior Citizens, Female passengers of 45 years and above automatically, even if no choice is given, subject to availability of accommodation at the time of booking.
- In all trains having reserved accommodation, a combined quota of two lower births per coach has been earmarked in sleeper, A/C 3 tier and A/C 2 tier classes for the Senior Citizens, Female passengers aged 45 years above and pregnant women when travelling alone.
- Accommodation is also earmarked for Senior Citizens during specified hours on suburban sections by Central and Western Railways.
- Instructions exist for provisions of wheel chairs at stations. This facility is provided, duly escorted by coolies on payment as per present practice. Moreover, Zonal Railways have also been advised to provide free of cost 'Battery Operated Vehicles for Disabled and Old Aged passengers' at Railway Stations.
- After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train and if any physically handicapped person booked on the authority of handicapped concession or a senior citizen, who has been allotted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the on-board Ticket Checking Staff has been authorised to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the chart.
- Separate counters are earmarked at various Passengers Reservation System (PRS) centres for dealing with the reservation requisitions received from physically handicapped persons, senior citizens, ex-MPs, MLAs accredited journalists and freedom fighters, if the average demand per shift not less than 120 tickets. In case there is no justification for earmarking of an exclusive counter for any of these categories of persons including handicapped persons or senior citizens, one or two counters depending upon the total demand are earmarked for dealing with the reservation requests for all these categories of persons.

- **Ministry of Finance**

A number of incentives have been provided under the Income Tax Act, 1961, to a senior citizen (*i.e.*, an individual, resident in India, who is of the age of 60 years or more at any time during the relevant previous year). Some such incentives are enumerated below:

- A Senior Citizen is liable to Income-Tax if his total income exceeds ₹3 lakh as against the exemption limit of ₹2.5 lakh applicable in the case of other individuals. An individual resident in India who is of the age of 80 years or more at any time during the relevant previous year is liable to income tax if his total income exceeds ₹5 lakh.
- Any sum deposited in an account under the Senior Citizens Savings Scheme Rules, 2004 is eligible for deduction under section 80C of the Income-Tax Act subject to a limit of ₹1.5 lakh.
- A deduction of ₹20,000/- (₹15,000/- in other cases) is allowed under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act in respect of premium paid to effect or keep in force an insurance on the health of an individual being a Senior Citizen.
- A deduction of ₹60,000/- (₹40,000/- in other cases) is allowed under Section 80DDB of the Income-Tax Act on amount of expenditure actually incurred for the treatment of specified diseases in case of a Senior Citizen.
- No deduction of tax at source is required to be made under Section 193, 194, 194A, 194EE or 194K of the Income Tax Act in case of Senior Citizen if he furnishes to the deductor a declaration to the effect that the tax on his estimated total income of the relevant previous will be nil.

- **Ministry of Civil Aviation:**

In order to facilitate the passengers, particularly senior citizens, expectant mothers, passengers with disability, first time travellers etc. all the stakeholders have been instructed to ensure that the following requirements are complied:

- Airline /airport operator shall ensure provision of automated buggies free of charge for all senior citizens, in the terminal building to facilitate their access to boarding gates located beyond reasonable walking distance at all airports having annual aircraft movements of 50,000 or more. This facility may be extended to other needy passengers on demand basis free of charge.
- Airport operators shall provide small trolleys after security check for carriage of hand baggage (permitted as per regulation) up to the boarding gate.
- Airport operator shall adequately display information regarding availability of automated buggies and small trolleys in the terminal building at prominent locations including dos and don'ts regarding the same. This shall also be published on the website of the airport operator.
- Further, Air India offers 50% discount to senior citizens on the highest

economy class Basic Fare. The discount is offered to those who have completed 63 years of age on the date of commencement of journey.

- Senior citizens can also avail multi-level fares offered by Air India on each sector for travel on domestic sectors, starting from a low level advance purchase fares which facilitate early selling to the highest one.

#### **Sub-Plan for Scheduled Castes**

1358. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the current practice of implementing the Sub-Plan for Scheduled Castes; and
- (b) whether there is any proposal to bring legislation of Sub-Plan for Scheduled Caste (SC) for effective gap filling in the development indices between the members of SC community and the rest of the society and if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI VIJAY SAMPLA): (a) The Planning Commission has issued revised guidelines for implementation of SCSP to the Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs, *vide* its O.M. dated 11.02.2014 and 18.06.2014 respectively, for earmarking outlays for SCSP, to *inter-alia* estimate gaps, prioritize development needs of the SCs and orient the Schemes to bridge the gaps. The Schemes designed under SCSP should yield direct and quantifiable benefits to SC individuals, SC household and SC habitations. The funds so earmarked shall be non-divertible.

Central Ministries/Departments and States/UTs are advised from time to time to adhere to the guidelines of the Planning Commission for formulation, implementation and monitoring of the SCSP and for optimal utilization of funds. Further, while discussing Annual Plan proposal of States/UTs, the issue is discussed and States/UTs are impressed upon to ensure spending of funds for SCs in the States/UTs. Also, every year in the Union Budget, Statement-21 of the Expenditure Budget, Vol.-I contains detailed information regarding allocation and expenditure made under Scheduled Castes Sub Plan by the Central Ministries/Departments.

- (b) Final decision in this regard has not been taken by the Government.

#### **Menace of drug and alcohol addiction**

1359. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the funds allocated for prevention of alcoholism and drugs abuse remain grossly underutilized for the last several years;