

(b) if so, whether other backward classes have been scrutinised after ten years, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KRISHAN PAL): (a) Yes. As per Section 11(1) of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Act, 1993 the Central Government may at any time, and shall, at the expiration of ten years from the coming into force of this Act and every succeeding period of ten years thereafter, undertake revision of the lists with a view to excluding from such lists those classes who have ceased to be backward classes or for including in lists new backward classes.

(b) No review has been conducted till date.

Doorstep service to elderly population

1725. DR. PRABHAKAR KORE : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to provide doorstep services to elderly population in the country;

(b) the doorstep services which the Government is providing to elderly population at present, and the other social security measures Government plans to provide to elderly; and

(c) whether public utility services in the country will be mandated to create senior citizen cells to make available home services for the elderly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI VIJAY SAMPLA) : (a) to (c) As per available information, different services are being provided by the various Ministries of the Government of India for the welfare of senior citizens including doorstep services. These are given in the Statement (*See below*).

Statement

Different services being provided by Government of India to the senior citizens:

- (1) **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:** 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.

- (2) **Ministry of Rural Development:** National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a social welfare/social security scheme. Under the scheme of NSAP, financial assistance is provided to old age widows, disabled persons and bereaved families on death of primary breadwinner belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) household. This programme is implemented in the rural as well as urban areas. *w.e.f.* 01.07.2014, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme had been started for the three pension schemes *ie.*, Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) for transfer of benefit to the bank/post office account of beneficiaries. States/UTYs have been requested to avail the facilities of Banking Correspondents (BCs) for doorstep delivery of benefits under the schemes of NSAP.
- (3) **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:** So far as Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is concerned, this Ministry had launched the "National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE)" in 2010 to provide dedicated health care facilities to the elderly people through the State health delivery system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels including outreach services. 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.
- (4) **Ministry of Home Affairs:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued two detailed advisories dated 27-3-2008 and 30-8-2013 to all States Governments/UTs advising

them to take immediate measures to ensure safety and security and for elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence against old persons through initiatives such as identification of senior citizens, sensitization of police personnel regarding safety, security of older persons, regular visit of the beat staff; setting up of toll free senior citizen helpline; setting up of senior citizen security cell; verification of domestic helps, drivers etc.

(5) **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.
- (6) **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.
- (7) **Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue :** A number of incentives have been provided under the Income Tax Act, 1961, to a senior citizen (*ie.*, 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.
 - Under the Service Tax law, activities relating to advancement of education programmes or skill development relating to persons over the age of 65 years residing in a rural area by an entity registered under Section 12AA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 are exempt from Service Tax.