

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Five Public Interest Litigation (PIL) cases have been filed before the Supreme Court, and another two filed before the High Court of Bombay and Madras have also been transferred to the Supreme Court. All of them writ petitions have since been tagged and are being heard together. A number of issues have been raised in the petitions, including various aspects of data collection.

(b) In January 2009, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was established as an 'Attached Office' under the aegis of Planning Commission. In January 2015, Planning Commission was replaced by NITI Aayog.

(c) A number of Ministries / Departments of Central Government [such as Ministry of Finance, NITI Aayog (successor organisation of Planning Commission), Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, UIDAI, Department of Electronics and IT etc.] and all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are the respondents in various PIL cases (tagged together) pending before the Supreme Court of India. Ministry of Finance is the coordinating Ministry.

Barrier-free access for differently-abled persons

*45. DR. T. N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received large number of complaints regarding non-availability of barrier-free access for differently-abled persons in several public buildings/places including railways in the country, if so, the details thereof and the response of Government thereto;

(b) the steps taken by Government in coordination with the State Governments/UT Administrations for providing barrier-free access for differently-abled persons to public places by constructing ramps, lifts and railings; and

(c) the monitoring mechanism existing with Government to ensure easy accessibility for persons with disabilities in a non-discriminatory manner?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT) : (a) During the period from 01/01/2014 to 31/12/2014, office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities received 56 complaints related to accessibility of public buildings/places/facilities. Besides taking up the complaints with concerned authorities, the Office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities also takes up with the State Governments/UT Administrations

for providing barrier free access for persons with disabilities to public places, amending their building bye-laws, making it mandatory to incorporate accessible features before passing any building plan and giving completion certificate.

(b) As per Section 44 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, establishments in the transport sector within the limits of their economic capacity and development for the benefit of persons with disabilities, are required to take special measures to adapt rail compartments, buses, vessels and aircrafts in such a way as to permit easy access to such persons and adapt toilets in rail compartments, vessels, aircrafts and waiting rooms in such a way as to permit the wheel chair users to use them conveniently. Further, as per Section 46 of the said Act, the appropriate Government and local authorities, within the limits of their economic capacity and development , are required to provide for -

- (i.) ramps in public buildings;
- (ii.) adaptation of toilets for wheel chair users;
- (iii.) braille symbols and auditory signals in elevators or lifts;
- (iv.) ramps in hospitals, primary health centres and other medical care and rehabilitation institution.

The Ministry has been taking up the matter with the State Governments, UT Administration and concerned Ministries/Departments to comply with the above provisions of the Act from time to time. The matter has also been taken up at the level of Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities with the Chief Secretaries of the State/UTs. Further, the Ministry also provides financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations and institutions run by Central/State Governments for making their important buildings accessible to persons with disabilities. The office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities also organizes workshops/ seminars on barrier free environment for persons with disabilities.

(c) The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the State Commissioners in their respective States are mandated to monitor implementation of the provisions of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
