

Reduction in the age limit of senior citizens

†673. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it is being considered by Government to reduce the prescribed age limit of senior citizens from 65 to 60 years in near future for the purpose of the facilities being provided so far to them;

(b) if so, whether it is also being considered to seek the opinions of the State Governments on this matter;

(c) if so, the State Government's reaction thereto; and

(d) the assessment of the financial burden on the Central and State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN):

(a) The Ministry has announced a National Policy on Older Persons, which recognizes a person aged 60 years and above as a senior citizen. Accordingly, the Ministry has taken up the matter of reduction of the prescribed age limit of senior citizens from 65 to 60 years with the concerned Ministries/Departments/State Governments/UT Administrations for extending facilities/concessions to them in line with the National Policy on Older Persons. Ministry of Railways with effect from 1.4.2003 reduced the age limit of men from 65 years to 60 years for admissibility of the senior citizen concession. As such, all persons men as well as women aged 60 years and above are eligible for concession in train fares.

However, other Ministries/Departments concerned have taken their own decision as regards age for extending facilities/concessions to senior citizens. The Ministry of Civil Aviation is of the view that the question of extending any concession to senior citizens aged 60 years and above should be left to the Airlines, who would then take a decision in the matter

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

on the basis of their commercial considerations. The Ministry of Finance on its part has taken the stand that the reduction of age for senior citizens to 60 years under the Income Tax Act will require a policy decision which will have to be taken after due consideration to the revenue aspects.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has received a response in this regard from a few States only. The State Government of Haryana has informed that it is already conferring several benefits to persons aged 60 years and above. The State Government of West Bengal has adopted the age of 60 years for senior citizens. The State Governments of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Tamil Nadu & West Bengal are following the age of 60 years while Rajasthan is following the age of 58 years for males and 55 years for females and the State Government of Assam prescribes the age of 60 years for females for disbursement of old age pension to senior citizens.

(d) The assessment of the financial burden on the Central and State Governments is not possible since a separate data is not being maintained for the same.

Commission for weaker sections of society

674. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

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

(a) whether Government have set up three commissions, to study the roadmap for improvement of disadvantaged sections of society, the commission for disabled and also for Scheduled Tribes;

(b) by when these Commissions would submit their reports;

(c) the steps being taken to implement their recommendations;

(d) the population of these sections; and

(e) whether any amount has been allotted in the budget 2004-05 to implement the works to be undertaken?