

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -1088
ANSWERED ON - 31/07/2024

SENIOR CITIZEN WELFARE

1088. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA

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

- (a) whether Union Government's contribution to pensions for senior citizens has been raised to ₹1,000 per month, if not, the reasons for the same;
- (b) the steps taken to review and enforce the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior citizens Act, 2007;
- (c) the initiatives that Government has undertaken to address the healthcare needs of ageing population, particularly in terms of geriatric care facilities and specialised medical services for senior citizens; and
- (d) the measures taken to ensure easy access to legal services and social security for senior citizens?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B.L.VERMA)

- (a) The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), under which, *inter alia* old age pension is provided only to persons with age of 60 years and above who belongs to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. Senior citizens of any other category are not covered under NSAP pension benefits. Under one of the component of NSAP, there is provision of financial assistance of Rs.200/- per month to persons in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs.500/- per month to persons of 80 years and above.
- (b) The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE) enacted the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007. DoSJE through National Productivity Council (NPC) had conducted a study on functioning and effectiveness of the MWPSA Act 2007 in 2019-20 by taking feedback from some of the State Governments and key stakeholders.

As per Section 22 of MWPC Act, 2007 the State Government confers the powers and duties on a District Magistrate to ensure implementation of the provisions of this Act. The State Government also prescribes Comprehensive Action Plan for protection of life and property of senior citizens.

(c) For providing geriatric care facilities and specialised medical services, DoSJE implements 'Training of Geriatric Caregivers' under Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY). Its objective is to bridge the gap in supply and increasing demand in the field of geriatric caregivers so as to provide more professional services to the senior citizens and also to create a cadre of professional caregivers in the field of geriatrics. DoSJE also supports State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSRc) under which funds are released to different States/UTs for 'Training of Geriatric Caregivers'.

While the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare implements National Programme for Healthcare of the Elderly (NPHCE) Scheme under which easily accessible and affordable healthcare services are being provided to the elderly above 60 years of the age at primary, secondary and tertiary care levels. Elderly care has also been included in the package of healthcare services at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs – Sub Health Centre (SHC) & Primary Health Centre (PHC)/ Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC). At all the levels of healthcare facilities, drugs are provided free of cost to the patients including the geriatric population.

Under National Mental Health Programme of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) is operational in almost all the districts of India. The DMHP Teams at the district level consists of Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatric Social Worker, Psychiatric Nurse as well as Community Nurse. DMHP Team provides Out-Patient Department (OPD) and In-Patient Department (IPD) services at District Hospitals and outreach OPD services at Primary Health Centre (PHC), Community Health Centre (CHC) and Sub-Centres. Further, at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Mental Health has been included in the package of comprehensive primary health care at community and health centre level, close to the patients' homes.

(d) Under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (MWPC) 2007 there are provisions for easy access to legal services for Senior Citizens. Additionally, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) under Department of Justice has established the Legal Services to Senior Citizens Scheme, 2016. This scheme offers free legal aid to senior citizens entitled under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. It includes setting up legal service clinics at tribunals and old age homes, staffed by trained paralegal volunteers who assist senior citizens with legal procedures. These clinics play a crucial role in ensuring access to government schemes, pension benefits, and other entitlements for senior citizens.
