

SOCIAL WELFARE INCLUDING WELFARE OF HANDICAPPED AND MENTALLY RETARDED.

(Item No. 26)

01. The 73rd constitutional amendment envisages entrustment of powers and responsibilities to Panchayat Raj Institutions in respect of 29 items of which item 26 is related to Social Welfare including Welfare of Handicapped and mentally retarded. This item covers welfare of disabled, street children, adoption of children, welfare of the aged, drug use prevention, rehabilitation of beggars, juvenile justice administration, Noon Meal Programme and awakening against social evils.

Rehabilitation of the Disabled :

02. As per 1991 census, it is estimated that there are 11.13 lakh disabled persons in Tamilnadu. There are about 217 special schools for the disabled out of which 23 are run by the Government - 11 schools are for blind, 10 for deaf and dumb, 1 for mentally retarded and 1 for severely orthopaedically handicapped. Totally 8726 children are availing these special education facilities. Besides 20 pre-schools have been started in 20 districts for the hearing impaired children. Training programmes are being conducted for the teachers of the special schools. The disabled persons undergo training in certain trades through established training centres and placements are given for the trained persons as apprentices in Government industrial establishments, Government undertakings and private establishments. There is a modern training-cum-production workshop at Mutakadu which produces tri-cycles, wheel chairs, folding sticks and other steel products. Free travel concession is given to handicapped persons in State Transport Corporation buses. An artificial limb sub centre has been established at Madurai to cater to the needs of 100 severely orthopaedically handicapped children studying in the Government Special Schools. It provides education, surgical correction, physiotherapy exercise, free supply of calipers etc. The District rehabilitation centre at Chengalpattu is one of the 12 projects established in India, which identifies the handicapped, assesses their needs and provides rehabilitation assistance. The Government Regional Braille Press meets the Braille book requirement of the Government aided schools. The Government rehabilitation home with sheltered workshop for blind women, Poonamallee provides training in chalk-piece making and weaving and the products are sold to hospitals and schools.

03. Besides, a comprehensive prevention of Polio and rehabilitation of Polio victims is being implemented in a phased manner from 1989 onwards. So far, upto 1995-96, in phases, 310 blocks have been selected and nearly 6,60,91 victims are identified and the same got rehabilitated. Comprehensive medical assessment camps have been conducted in these blocks. Polio victims are assessed to get various benefits such as medical assistance, surgical corrections, physiotherapy exercise, free supply of tricycles, wheel chairs, calipers, crutches, admission into transitional schools and special schools, sanction of scholarships, vocational training, placement in jobs, assistance for self employment with bank loan and Government subsidy, sanction of old age pension and maintenance allowance, depending upon the need of each polio victim. The Health department is taking care of polio prevention.

Social Defence :

04. The special programmes implemented by the Government for Juveniles and maladjusted groups include preventive, correctional and rehabilitative services. Under the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act 1986 and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956, residential institutions were established to provide care, treatment, custody, educational and vocational training, rehabilitation to the children and women who came under the provisions of the above said Acts. There are 11 Observation homes, 10 Special Juvenile Homes, 6 Protective/Vigilance Homes and 3 After-care organisations run by the Government and 15 private institutions. These institutions impart educational training and other commercial training.

Rehabilitation of Beggars :

05. Many states have passed anti-beggary legislation. In others, Municipal and Police Acts provide for measures against begging. As a rehabilitative measure, the beggars are identified and taken for vocational training in the work centres located in the beggar homes run by the voluntary organisations receiving grant in aid from Government of India and State Government. The Scheme for eradication of juvenile beggary has been sanctioned to provide services such as creches, pre-school centre, non formal education/functional literacy, educational literacy, educational/vocational training, recreational facilities through NGOs.

Welfare of the Aged :

06. With increasing life expectancy, the number of aged people is increasing. According to 1991 Census, 8.32% of the population is in the age group of 65 years and above as compared to only 6.51% in 1981. Old age homes run by the voluntary organisations provide shelter to the senior citizens. At present, 10 old age homes are functioning in the State for providing shelter, feeding and health care to these old people. The old age people, who have no means of subsistence and have no relatives, are given pensions under Old Age Pension scheme from 1962. All these old age pensioners are getting noon meal in the Noon Meal Centres.

Adoption of Children :

07. In pursuance of directions of the Supreme court in W.P.No. (Cr 1) 1171/82, a State level Agency has been constituted in 1991. The agency will be incharge of all matters relating to the promotion of adoption viz., collection of data, processing of application received from the Voluntary organisations for recognition by the Government of India to undertake intercountry adoption, undertake inspection, update the list of voluntary organisations recognised for inter-country adoptions and foreign adoption sponsoring agencies, review the progress reports submitted by the recognised institutions, verify the records maintained by the recognised institutions and provide information required by the Central Agency.

State Support:

08. The allocation of funds for these programmes during the past three years is as follows:

(Rs.in lakhs)

Head	1994-95 Actuals	1995-96 Revised Estimate	1996-97 Revised B.E.
1. Welfare of Handicapped	919.98	943.95	1014.15
2. Welfare of aged, infirm and destitute	413.91	467.65	498.76
3. Correctional services	542.74	649.32	721.68
4. Other Social Security and Welfare of old age pensioners	5540.14	7428.60	7432.90

Panchayat Raj Institutions

09. The Panchayat Raj Institutions have to play a crucial role in strengthening the education, employment and training facilities for the disabled to make them self-reliant and economically independent. The State Planning Commission Group feels that the involvement of the community in such programmes is vital and the administrative machinery should provide all possible technical guidance to the District Panchayats. With these objectives in view, the State Planning Commission Group recommends the following powers and responsibilities to be entrusted with the 3 tier Panchayat Raj Institutions.

I. VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> (1)	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> (2)
1. Welfare of the Disabled	
A. Prevention and early detection of disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Take Census of the disabled, and forward to Panchayat Union. ii) Assist in the measures for prevention of disabilities by coordinating the activities of Health, and the Disabled Department. iii) Assist in screening all the children at least once a year for the purpose of identifying 'at-risk' and 'high-risk' cases with the help of NGOs. iv) Create awareness about the causes of disabilities, preventive measures to be adopted and utilise message delivery systems for this purpose.
B. Educational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in providing functional literacy to illiterate disabled children in the age group of sixteen and above; assist in providing non-formal education with the available manpower in rural areas after giving them appropriate orientation. ii) Arrange for the timely supply of textbooks, notebooks, uniforms, scholarship, free bus passes and other materials. iii) Take steps and encourage voluntary organisations to set up special schools/institutes for hearing impaired, mentally retarded and spastics children; assist the Government also in setting up such schools and ensure proper infrastructural facilities. iv) Endeavour to equip the special schools for disabled children with vocational training facilities.
C. Employment facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Arrange for training and skill imparting programmes with the help of NGOs and help the disabled to get suitable jobs. ii) Assist in self-employment ventures; assist the disabled in getting loans for these ventures; assist them in getting bunk stalls and other shops.
D. Other Welfare and rehabilitative measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in identifying the disabled who need aids and appliances and assist in the distribution of the same. ii) Take special steps for the protection and rehabilitation of the mentally retarded. iii) Ensure preferential allotment of land at concessional rates for houses, setting of business centres etc. iv) Assist in the issue of identification cards; assist in getting free bus passes and other services. v) Mobilise the support of NGOs for the welfare and rehabilitative measures. vi) Arrange for sports meets and encourage the disabled in sports activities at village level.
2. Welfare of the aged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Take the census of the aged above 60 years, identify the destitute old and maintain a record at the village level.

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Assist the old age people in getting old age pension and free supply of items given by the Government. iii) Take steps to give the aged persons vocational training and engage them in acceptable activity including self-employment ventures. iv) Issue identity cards for them. v) Create awareness among people through message delivery systems about the need for taking care of the old. vi) Assist in setting up day care centres for the old age people.
3. Prevention of drug abuse and alcoholism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Build awareness and educate people and students about the ill effects of the drug abuse and alcoholism through media and other message delivery systems; involve NGOs for this purpose. ii) Assist in early detection, preventive education, counselling and supportive rehabilitative measures for drug de-addiction. iii) Take measures to curb peddling of drugs. iv) Involve health personnel in the treatment of drug addicts and alcoholics. v) Sensitise the teachers to handle drug problem among children. vi) Assist the women functionaries and rural women who are involved in eradicating the habit of drinking among men. vii) Assist in setting up of Family Counselling centres by NGOs and draw up a programme of motivation, counselling, treatment, follow-up and social re-integration of cured drug addicts.
4. Rehabilitation of beggars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Identify the beggars of all age-groups. ii) Assist in the rehabilitation measures for beggars. iii) Assist in the provision of services relating to the eradication of juvenile beggary.
5. Rehabilitation of Juveniles and maladjusted women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in referring the cases to Juvenile Welfare Boards and Juvenile Courts ii) Mobilise the support of NGOs to educate the children and prevent them from committing crimes. iii) Assist in the rehabilitative measures for morally maladjusted women and in awareness creation; mobilise the support of NGOs.

II. PANCHAYAT UNION

<i>ACTIVITY</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> <i>(2)</i>
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1. Welfare of the Disabled

- A. Prevention and early detection of disabilities i) Collect from the Village Panchayats the documented census data on the disabled, survey and investigation reports on the causes of occurrence of disabilities and forward them to District Panchayat.

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B. Education facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Assist the Village Panchayat in their measures for prevention of disabilities and co-ordination of activities of the Health, Nutrition and Rehabilitation of the Disabled Departments; play a supervisory role also. iii) Assist in the awareness creation measures of the Village Panchayat. i) Render all possible assistance, supervise and monitor the activities of Village Panchayat in the provision of educational facilities such as setting up of special schools, integration education, non-formal education, vocational training, infrastructural facilities etc. ii) Conduct periodical meetings with representatives of Village Panchayat and Panchayat Union, NGOs, Department officials to know the deficiencies and take corrective measures.
C. Employment facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist in the training and skill imparting programmes; mobilise the support of NGOs; assist in getting suitable jobs; assist in the registration in employment exchanges. ii) Assist in self-employment ventures; liaison in the availing of loan facilities. iii) Monitor the enforcement of the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, relating to employment. iv) Conduct periodical review meetings with elected representatives and officials to identify the gaps in the provision of facilities for employment.
D. Welfare and rehabilitative measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Monitor and supervise the distribution of aids and appliances to the disabled. ii) Work out sufficient intervention for the protection and rehabilitation of mentally retarded and assist the Village Panchayat. iii) Assist in taking steps for the removal of the architectural barriers for the easy movement of the disabled. iv) Ensure the enforcement of the provisions contained in "The Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, protection of rights and Full participation) Act, 1995 relating to the Welfare and rehabilitative measures for the disabled. v) Assist in the preferential allotment of lands at concessional rates for houses. vi) Ensure the issue of identification cards to disabled; assist the disabled in utilising the concessions given by the Government. vii) Conduct sports meets at the Panchayat Union level. viii) Conduct periodical review meetings and the recommendations for improvement in the measures may be forwarded to District Panchayat.
2. Rehabilitation and welfare of street and working children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Collect the documented data from the Village level, maintain a record at the Panchayat Union Level and forward it to the District Panchayat.

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3. Welfare of the aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Assist the Village Panchayat in their steps to rehabilitate the street and working children in setting up night shelters and day care centres both for boys and girls; mobilise the support of NGOs. i) Collect the census data of the aged people from the Village Panchayat and forward them to the District Panchayat. ii) Assist the Village Panchayat in helping the aged in getting pension and other facilities, identity cards and vocational training etc. iii) Review the functioning of the old age homes.
4. Prevention of drug abuse and alcoholism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assist the Village Panchayat in the awareness creation about the ill effects of drug abuse and alcoholism. ii) Assist the Village Panchayat in the orientation programmes to health personnel to handle drug addicts; in sensitising the teachers to educate the drug addict children; in developing training modules for the social workers/educators to educate the drug addicts. iii) Assist the women functionaries and women who are involved in eradicating the habit of drinking among men. iv) Assist in establishing Family Counselling Centres.
5. Rehabilitation of juveniles and morally maladjusted women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Ensure that the police personnel treat the juveniles with a humane approach. ii) Mobilise the support of NGOs to educate the children and prevent them from committing crimes. iii) Supervise the functioning of the observation homes, protective homes, vigilance homes, juvenile homes and after-care institutions. iv) Arrange for moral instruction and self-improvement classes with the help of social workers. v) Assist in the training of both governmental and voluntary functionaries engaged in juvenile justice activities. vi) Assist in the preparation of annual reports and compile the statistical data relating to juveniles and forward them to District Panchayats. vii) Create awareness among the public to treat the discharged inmates as normal persons. viii) Conduct periodical review meetings to identify the deficiencies in the implementation of the programmes and take corrective measures.

III. DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> (1)	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> (2)
1. District overview of Social Welfare, Rehabilitation of the disabled and Social Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Prepare Annual Reports utilising the census and other documented data, survey and investigation reports from the Village Panchayat / Panchayat Union on Disabled, street and working children, old age people, beggars, drug addicts, juveniles and morally maladjusted women. ii) Encourage the raising of local resources and supplement budgetary support. iii) Hold periodic review conferences and maintain a panel for assessment of quality of services rendered, draw a concerted plan of action and follow-up iv) Identify the gaps and mobilise the cooperation of Village Panchayat, Panchayat Union and all others concerned to overcome the gaps. v) Take steps to solicit the support, ideas and in particular take help from the elected women representative for expansion of activities and social audit on the utilisation of services.
2. Rehabilitation and welfare of the disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Create a data base at the district level and develop a management Information system. ii) Monitor and review through the Standing Committee on Health, all schemes and programmes relating to the provision of educational and employment facilities, welfare and rehabilitation measures, prevention and early detection of disabilities, awareness creation. iii) Evaluate the impact of the programmes, identify the deficiencies and suggest corrective measures. iv) Conduct periodical review meetings study the evaluation reports and suggest modifications in the interventions. v) Advise the Government for improving the facilities provided for the welfare of the disabled and the infrastructural facilities for the institutions. vi) Review periodically the training and orientation given to the personnel and social workers and suggest improvements.
3. Rehabilitation and welfare of street and working children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Conduct situational analysis of street and working children at the district level by collecting information from the Panchayat Union. ii) Monitor and review the rehabilitation measures; ensure the proper functioning of the night shelters and day care centres; ensure the provision of infrastructural facilities. iii) Conduct periodical review meetings, identify the deficiencies and suggest appropriate interventions.
4. Welfare of the aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Create a data base on the aged and destitute old. ii) Monitor, review and evaluate the functioning of old age homes and suggest improvements. iii) Ensure the timely disbursement of old age pension and distribution of clothes.

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	iv) Conduct periodical review meetings to identify the deficiencies and take corrective measures.
5. Prevention of drug abuse and alcoholism	i) Assist the Panchayat Union in the sensitisation campaigns for drug de-addiction and anti-alcoholism. ii) Monitor the counselling, supportive and rehabilitative measures for drug addicts and alcoholics taken at the Panchayat Union Level. iii) Assist in the establishment of drug deaddiction centres and after care centres. iv) Involve the hospitals at the district level in the treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts. v) Sensitise the judiciary and police to look at children affected by drugs more as victims rather than as drug abusers and deviants. vi) Monitor and supervise the measures taken to curb peddling drugs. vii) Form vigilance committees to curb drug-trafficking and to assist in the rehabilitative measures. viii) Assist in establishing Family Counselling Centres.
6. Rehabilitation of beggars	i) Monitor the enforcement of the provisions of the anti-Beggary legislations. ii) Monitor the rehabilitation measures for beggars and juvenile beggars.
7. Rehabilitation of Juveniles and morally maladjusted women	i) Monitor the enforcement of the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 at the village Panchayat level and Panchayat union level. ii) Monitor and review the activities of the Panchayat Union relating to the rehabilitation and after care services to juveniles and morally maladjusted women. iii) Assist the Panchayat Union in getting grants for the juvenile justice administration. iv) Ensure the educational programmes emphasising the academic, health, social, moral and ethical aspects. v) Conduct periodical review meetings with Panchayat Union, identify the deficiencies and suggest corrective measures.
8. Personnel management and implementation of schemes	i) All schemes indicated in the above 7 items will be vested with District Panchayats for implementation (this recommendation will call for amendments to Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994). Till such amendment is done, review and monitoring powers may be entrusted to District Panchayats. ii) Personnel implementing the schemes at the District and below levels will come under the control of the District Panchayats.

Administrative, Financial and Legal Implications

10. The State Planning Commission Group is of the view that the personnel of the District Office for the Rehabilitation of the disabled should be fully and wholly responsible to the local self-Government. Since the personnel at the District level are full-time Government Servants, the District Panchayats should be entrusted with powers to control administratively the District Rehabilitation offices for making them accountable to these democratic institutions.

11. The State Planning Commission Group recommends review and supervisory functions to the Panchayat Raj Institutions. The Social Welfare Department implements a variety of schemes for welfare of women, children and handicapped. At the District level, the District Social Welfare Officer and the District Officer for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled are responsible for implementation of schemes. They should attend the review meetings of District Panchayats. Similarly officials of Social Welfare Department below the District level should attend the review meetings at Panchayat Union level and take follow up action on the recommendations of Panchayat Union/Village Panchayat. One of the functions of the anganwadi workers is to detect childhood disability through a survey. The Village Panchayat should ensure this function of the anganwadi worker and the anganwadi workers should be made accountable to Village Panchayat.

12. There is one Mukhyasevika and 2 gramasevikas per block under social welfare. They were also looking after the work connected with the Rehabilitation of the Disabled before the bifurcation of the Directorate of Social Welfare. Now they carry out only the activities related to women's welfare and child welfare. The Panchayat Union should ensure that the mukhyasevikas and gramasevikas carry out the activities for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled also.

13. The schemes implemented for the Rehabilitation of Disabled through the District Rehabilitation offices should be reviewed and monitored by the District Panchayats. The operation and maintenance of various special schools for the disabled at the District level may be reviewed by the District Panchayats.

14. The District Committee monitors the reservation of 3% of vacancies for disabled in all the State/Public Services and Educational institutions under all kinds of managements like Government, local bodies and also in the selection of beneficiaries for aids and appliances. The District Committee should play a vital role in coordinating the activities of different departments relating to education, employment, loan sanction, rehabilitation etc. The Advisory Committee may be set up at each level of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, viz., Village Panchayat, Panchayat Union and District Panchayat. It should also be ensured that the provisions of 'The persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995' are enforced.

15. The District Panchayats will monitor the functioning of the Homes and conduct review meetings which will be attended by the personnel of the Homes, members of Juvenile Welfare Boards and Juvenile Guidance Bureau. The District Panchayats should provide linkages with the activities of various Departments that are involved in the rehabilitative measures like education, vocational training, employment, nutrition and health care of Juveniles, morally maladjusted women, street and working children, beggars and discharged inmates of the Homes.