

No accurate count of population of Persons with Disabilities, says parliamentary panel

The Centre is already under fire from rights activists and Opposition over dropping disability-related questions in the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey

July 28, 2023 02:25 am | Updated 08:05 am IST - New Delhi

ABHINAY LAKSHMAN

COMMENTS

SHARE

 READ LATER



The government explained that data on PwDs are largely taken from the decennial censuses conducted by the office of the Registrar General and sample surveys on disability conducted by the National Sample Survey of the National Statistical Office. File | Photo Credit: The Hindu

Already under fire from rights activists and the Opposition over dropping disability-related questions in the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the

Union government was on Thursday pulled up by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment for failing to accurately estimate the current population of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the country.

In its report on the action taken by the government on its recommendations made in March, the House Panel, headed by BJP MP Rama Devi, said at least until the results of Census 2021 were made available, which might take “considerable time”, the government ought to use every resource it has to correctly estimate the population of PwDs. This included collaborating with State governments, using data from surveys they are conducting, consulting experts, and sensitising surveyors of the Ministry of Statistics.

In its reply to the committee’s recommendations in March, the government explained that data on PwDs are largely taken from the decennial censuses conducted by the office of the Registrar General and sample surveys on disability conducted by the National Sample Survey of the National Statistical Office.

Identity cards

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities went on to explain that the government had introduced a measure to provide Unique Disability ID (UDID) cards to all those covered under schemes meant for them. It said anyone could sign up to get the certificate and based on that policies can be designed and delivered.

However, responding to this, the committee said this “may not work”. “By the department’s own admission, it has issued 94.09 lakh UDID cards so far whereas the PwD population even 10 years ago was more than double that number.” The House committee failed to understand the rationale of the department for doing so.

Further, when the Opposition and rights activists had cornered the government over dropping of the disability-related questions from the NFHS-6 last month, the Health Ministry had justified this in an official communication on June 22, saying that most of this data were already available through the 76th Round of the NSS conducted in 2018.

But before the House panel, the Department of PwDs submitted that this survey had collected information on indicators of incidence and prevalence of disability such as cause of disability, age at onset, facilities available, difficulties faced, and other details. The government told the committee, “This data is used during policy formulation for

empowerment of PwDs. However, in this survey, there is no account of total number of PwDs presently in India.”

The committee went on to recommend to the government, “We feel there is an urgent requirement to explore innovative solutions to this issue. We therefore reiterate earlier recommendation that the department must explore other avenues and collaborate with the State governments and other departments / organisations which are engaged in implementation of the schemes for welfare of PwDs to arrive at a realistic assessment of the PwD population in the country.”



Get Curated Updates

Sign up for our free newsletters to get in-depth analyses, previews for the day ahead, thoughtful roundups and more.

EXPLORE OUR NEWSLETTERS

COMMENTS

SHARE

Related Topics

[disabled](#) / [Parliament proceedings](#)

Latest News

- 7 mins ago - Tamil Nadu
Top Tamil Nadu news developments today
- 19 mins ago - Kerala
Top Kerala News developments today
- 26 mins ago - Visakhapatnam
CM to lay foundation stone for Inorbit Mall in Visakhapatnam on August 1
- 52 mins ago - Telangana
Kaddam project witnesses higher inflows than discharge

READ MORE STORIES