

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ABSTRACT

WCD & SC – Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction – LOCKDOWN period - Declaration of State Commissioner for Rights of Persons with Disabilities As State Nodal Authority for Persons with Disabilities & The District Welfare Officer WCD&SC/Assistant Director, WD & SC Dept. Hyderabad as District Coordinators in respect of PwDs – Orders - Issued.

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN, DISABLED AND SENIOR
CITIZENS (SCHEMES-II)

G.O.Rt.No.34,

Dated: 31-03-2020

Read the followings:-

1. D.O.Letter No.Secy/1/2020, dated:26-03-2020 of Secretary to GOI, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Dept., for Empower of PwDs (Divyangjan), New Delhi, with Guidelines for implementation.
2. Section 8 & 25 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

ORDER:

In the reference 1st read above, the Government of India has issued Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines for protection and safety of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) during LOCKDOWN period.

2. In terms of the above guidelines and as per provisions enshrined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 such as section 8 (4), Section 25 and its sub sections (a),(c), (i)and (j), the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities is hereby declared as the State Nodal Authority in respect of Persons with Disabilities and entrusted with the responsibility to act as overall in-charge, to initiate necessary measures for protection and safety of Persons with Disabilities and to play catalyst role in resolving disability specific issues during the crisis period, arising out of epidemic COVID-19 period and its containment .

3. The State Commissioner will coordinate with State Disaster Management Authority, Health, Police and other line Departments as well as District Collectors and District level officers in effective implementation of various measures pertaining to sensitization, awareness generation in accessible format, and facilitation of special disability specific requirements of Persons with Disabilities, during the crisis period of lockdown and in case of quarantine and treatment of PwDs.

4. The District Welfare Officer, Women Children Disabled and Senior Citizens Department of all Districts except Hyderabad and Assistant Director of Welfare of Disabled and Senior Citizens, Hyderabad, who are dealing with the subject of Empowerment of PwDs in the State are also hereby declared as the District Coordinators in respect of implementation of various measures and facilitation to be initiated for Persons with Disabilities during the lock down / quarantine or treatment period and will be working in good coordination with the State Nodal Officer for Persons with Disabilities, effectively implementing the guidelines under the Supervision of their concerned District Collectors in their concerned Districts. The District Coordinators will be responsible to furnish status report on aforesaid implementation of various measures from time to time.

(P.T.O.)

5. The State Nodal Authority and District Coordinators and all the Collectors and District Magistrate shall take necessary measures to implement the guidelines appended to this order for protection and safety of Persons with Disabilities during LOCKDOWN period in State of Telangana.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF TELANGANA)

D.DIVYA,
SPECIAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.

To

1. The State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Hyderabad.
2. All the District Welfare Officers in the State of Telangana.
3. The Assistant Director, O/o.WCD & SC, Hyderabad
4. All Collectors and District Magistrate in the State of Telangana.
5. The Director, Welfare of Disabled and Senior Citizens, Hyderabad.

Copy to:

1. The Heads of all Departments in the State Telangana.
2. The P.S. to Principal Secretary to Government, State Disaster Management for favour of information.
3. All Secretariat Departments, Government of Telangana, Hyderabad for information and necessary action.
4. The Commissioner, Women Development and Child Welfare Department, Hyderabad.

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //


SECTION OFFICER

ANNEXURE

to the G.O.Rt.No.34, Dept. for WCD & SC (Sch.II), Dt:31.03.2020.

Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines for protection and safety of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) during LOCKDOWN period.

In view of the pandemic situation due to the outbreak and rapid spread of COVID19 across the world, the public health has been endangered both nationally and internationally, necessitating urgent measures on the part of both the Central and State Governments, aimed at containing the spread of the disease. The Government of India has declared the situation arising out of COVID 19 as a National Disaster and necessary guidelines have been issued under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005.

2. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India being the nodal Central Ministry on health issues has issued guidelines for general public as well as health workers to contain the spread of the disease. These are available on their website (www.mohfw.gov.in) which *inter-alia* contains:-

- Awareness material (both in Hindi and English) for citizens and frontline workers;
- Advisory on mass gatherings and social distancing;
- Guidelines and procedure to be followed by hospitals including telemedicine practices for patient care;
- Common Helpline Numbers: 1075, 011-23978046, 9013151515
- Frequently Asked Questions

3. While COVID 19 is impacting the entire population, persons with disabilities are more vulnerable to the disease due to their physical, sensory and cognitive limitations. As such, there is a need to understand their disability specific requirements, daily living activities and take appropriate and timely measures to ensure their protection and safety during situations of risk.

4. Section 8 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 guarantees equal protection and safety for persons with disabilities in these situations. It also mandates Disaster Management Authorities at District/State/National levels to take measures to include persons with disabilities in disaster management activities and to keep them duly informed about these. These authorities are mandatorily required to involve the concerned State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities during disaster management. In September 2019, National Disaster Management Authority, Union Ministry of Home Affairs issued National Disaster Management Guidelines on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) in line with the above provisions. Further, recently on 24th March 2020, Ministry of Home Affairs has issued guidelines for various authorities so as to prevent spread of COVID 19 for a period of 21 days starting from 25.3.2020.

5. While the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Home Affairs are applicable to all citizens, the following measures are suggested which need to be acted upon by various State/District authorities to give focused attention to protection and safety of persons with disabilities during LOCKDOWN period.

6. General action points

- All information about COVID 19, services offered and precautions to be taken should be available in simple and local language in accessible formats; i.e. in Braille and audible tapes for persons with visual impairment, video-graphic material with sub-titles and sign language interpretation for persons with hearing impairment and through accessible web sites.
- Sign language interpreters who work in emergency and health settings should be given the same health and safety protection as other health care workers dealing with COVID19.
- All persons responsible for handling emergency response services should be trained on the rights of persons with disabilities, and on risks associated with additional problems for persons having specific impairments.
- Relevant information on support to persons with disabilities should be a part of all awareness campaigns
- During quarantine, essential support services, personal assistance, and physical and communication accessibility should be ensured e.g. blind persons, persons with intellectual/ mental disability (psycho-social) are dependent on care giver support. Similarly persons with disabilities may seek assistance for rectification of fault in their wheelchair and other assistive devices.
- Caregivers of persons with disabilities should be allowed to reach Persons with disabilities by exempting them from restrictions during lockdown or providing passes in a simplified manner on priority.
- To ensure continuation of support services for persons with disabilities with minimum human contact, due publicity needs to be given to ensuring personal protective equipments for caregivers.
- The Resident Welfare Associations should be sensitized about the need of persons with disabilities so as to allow entry of maid, caregiver and other support providers to their residence after following due sanitizing procedure.
- Persons with disabilities should be given access to essential food, water, medicine, and, to the extent possible, such items should be delivered at their residence or place where they have been quarantined.
- The States/UTs may consider reserving specific opening hours in retail provision stores including super markets for persons with disabilities and older persons for ensuring easy availability of their daily requirements.
- Peer-support networks may be set up to facilitate support during quarantine for PwDs ;
- Additional protective measures should be taken for persons with disabilities based on their impairment who need to be given travel pass during the emergency period and should also be sensitized for their personal safety and protection.

- Persons with disabilities should be given priority in treatment, instead they should be given priority. Special care should be taken in respect of children and women with disabilities.
- Employees with blindness and other severe disabilities in both public and private sector should be exempted from essential services work during the period as they can be easily catch infection.
- On-line counselling mechanism should be developed to de-stress persons with disabilities as well as their families to cope with the quarantine period.
- 24X7 Helpline Number at State Level be set up exclusively for Divyangjan with facilities of sign language interpretation and video calling.
- The States/UTs may consider involving Organisation of Persons with Disabilities in preparation and dissemination of information material on COVID 19 for use of PwDs.

7. Mechanism to resolve disability specific issues during the period
(a) State Commissioner for PwDs

- The State Commissioners for PwDs should be declared as the State Nodal authority in respect of persons with disabilities.
- They should be the overall in-charge to resolve disability specific issues during the crisis period.
- They will coordinate with State Disaster Management Authority, Health, Police and other line Departments as well as District Collectors and district level officers dealing with persons with disabilities.
- They will be responsible to ensure that all information about COVID 19, public restriction plans, services offered are available in local language in accessible formats.

(b) District Officer dealing with empowerment of PwDs

- The District Officer dealing with empowerment of PwDs should be declared as the District Nodal authority in respect of persons with disabilities.
- He should have a list of PwDs in the District and monitor their requirements periodically and should have a separate list of persons with severe disabilities who need high support in the locality.
- He will be responsible for resolving the issue within the resources available and if necessary may take the help of Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations/Resident Welfare Associations.

Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines for Protection and safety of Persons with Disabilities during LOCKDOWN period in State of Telangana.

- The District Collector and Magistrate of the concerned District shall be taking additional care in terms of initiatives mentioned below, needed to cater the disability specific needs of Persons with Disabilities, in campaign launched for containment of COVID-19 during lockdown period, or quarantine or treatment related issues, by regularly supervising and monitoring the progress of implementation.
- The District Welfare Officers of Women Children Disabled and Senior Citizens of all Districts and Assistant Director of WD & SC Department, Hyderabad, dealing with empowerment of PwDs shall be the District Coordinators for Persons with Disabilities.
- They shall have the list of PwDs of concerned District and monitor special requirements of PwDs periodically and should have a separate list of persons with severe disabilities(PwDs) ** who need high support in the locality.
- Endeavour shall be made to identify the most vulnerable and susceptible population among the Persons with Disabilities who may be at higher risk of COVID 19 epidemic, and need of extra personal and medical care either at home or at hospital, such as persons with visual disability, persons with hearing impairment, PwDs with high support needs such as multiple disabled having either restrictive mobility or bed ridden, Persons with intellectual disability, PwDs suffering from other associated ailment, Pregnant PwD women or PwDs who are compelled to stay with family members affected of COVID19, or getting self affected to epidemic, or solitary living PwD couples, Aged PwD having no care givers, or PwDs who are identified for quarantine due to coming in touch with any suspect group of COVID 19 or to undergo treatment.
- The DWOs shall be entrusted with responsibility to resolve the issue related to Persons with Disabilities, within the resources available and if necessary may take the help of Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations/Resident Welfare Associations working in the field or exploring any available source such as institutions who express interest to extend help under CSR.
- The Persons with Disabilities shall be made aware of various precautionary measures to be taken during the lock down period to reduce the spread of COVID 19, such as importance of maintaining social distancing and avoiding mass gatherings.
- All information about COVID 19, services offered and precautions to be taken should be made available in simple and local language in accessible formats; i.e. in Braille and audible tapes for persons with visual impairment, video-graphic material with sub-titles and sign language interpretation for persons with hearing impairment and through accessible web sites and social media.
- The District Coordinators shall be in regular touch with the State Commissioner / State Nodal Officer for Persons with Disabilities and the State Monitoring Committee constituted.

- Sign language interpreters who work in emergency and health settings should be given the same health and safety protection as other health care workers dealing with COVID19.
- All the persons responsible for handling emergency response services should be trained on the disability specific special needs and Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and also on ways and means to manage them during lockdown and in case of quarantine and treatment period.
- Relevant information on support to persons with disabilities should be a part of all awareness campaigns.
- During lock down or quarantine period, all essential support services, personal assistance, and physical and communication accessibility should be ensured to Persons with Disabilities.
- Blind persons, persons with intellectual / mental disability (psycho-social)/ Multiple Disability are dependent on their care giver for support/escorts.
- Thus caregivers of persons with disabilities should be allowed to reach Persons with disabilities by exempting them from various restrictions during the lockdown period by providing access passes in a simplified manner on priority basis.
- To ensure continuation of support services to persons with disabilities with minimum human contact giving due publicity to the need, ensuring personal protective equipments for caregivers.
- The Resident Welfare Associations should be sensitized about the special need of the persons with disabilities, so as to allow entry of maid, caregiver and other support providers to their residence after following due sanitizing procedure.
- Persons with Disabilities shall be given access to essential food, water, medicine, and, to the extent possible, such items shall be delivered at their residence or place where they have been staying during lock down or in case during quarantine.
- Reserve specific opening hours may be allocated in retail provision stores/super markets ensuring easy availability of daily requirements to Persons with Disabilities and old persons..
- Peer-Support Networks may be set up to facilitate support during lock down and during the quarantine period of PwDs.
- Additional protective measures shall be taken for persons with disabilities based on their impairment and disability specific needs who need travel pass during the emergency period and should also be sensitized for their personal safety and protection.
- Persons with Disabilities should be given priority in treatment, and Special care shall be extended in respect of children and women with disabilities.

- Employees with blindness and other severe disabilities in both public and private sector shall be exempted from all essential service work during the period of lock down as they can be easily catch infection.
- On-line counseling mechanism shall be developed to de-stress persons with disabilities as well as their families to cope with lockdown and quarantine period.
- The services of NGOs working for the Persons with Disabilities/ activists may be involved in preparation and dissemination of relevant information material on COVID 19 for use of PwDs.
- Facilities such as rectification of fault of wheelchair and other assistive devices may be extended to the needy Persons with Disabilities during lockdown or in case during quarantine period.
- The District Disaster Management Authority, Health, Police and other line Departments and district level officers dealing with persons with disabilities shall work in good coordination to attain the objective of reaching the needy PwDs effectively.
- In any circumstances where there is any further need for specific clarification pertaining to issues of the Persons with Disabilities shall immediately be brought in to the notice of The State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities/State Nodal Authority who is entrusted with responsibility to resolve disability specific issues during the crisis period.
- Endeavour shall be made to make all information about COVID 19, Public restriction plans, services offered etc. are available in local language in accessible formats to the Persons with Disabilities.

D. DIVYA,
SPECIAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.