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SCHEME FOR PROVIDING PHYSICAL AIDS AND ASSISTED LIVING DEVICES TO SENIOR CITIZENS BELONGING TO BPL CATEGORY

1. Background

1.1 As per the Census figures of 2011, the population of senior citizens in India is 10.38 crore. More than 70% of the population of senior citizens live in rural areas of the country. A sizeable percentage (5.2%) of the senior citizens suffers from some sort of disabilities related to old age. Projections indicate that the number of elderly population will increase to around 173 million by 2026.

1.2 The Central Government proposes a new Central Sector Scheme to be put in place to provide Physical aids and Assisted Living Devices for such senior citizens suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, who belong to BPL category. Accordingly, the following scheme is hereby formulated for bringing such senior citizens into active life and to build an age-friendly society by providing them with devices to maintain near normalcy in mobility, communication and independence.

2. Aims and Objectives

The Central Sector Scheme aims at providing senior citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from any of the age related disability/infirmity mentioned in **Para 4**, with such assisted-living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions. The assistive devices shall be of high quality and conforming to the standards laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards, wherever applicable.

3. Scope of the Scheme

The beneficiaries of the Scheme shall include Senior Citizens of BPL Category suffering from any of the age related infirmities as indicated in **para 4** of the Scheme. For loss of vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and for loco-motor disability requiring wheelchair, a certificate from any Government Medical Officer shall suffice. For other simple devices stated in para 5 (items 1 to 4), the implementing agencies shall satisfy themselves as to the eligibility of the Senior Citizen to receive the device.

4. The Scheme aims to address following types of disability/infirmity:-

- (i) Low Vision;
- (ii) Hearing impairment;
- (iii) Loss of teeth; and
- (iv) Locomotor disability.

5. Types of Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices to be provided under the Scheme

The Scheme proposes to provide the following Aids and Assisted-Living Devices to eligible elderly beneficiaries, depending upon their physical impairment :-

- 1. Walking sticks
- 2. Elbow crutches
- 3. Walkers / Crutches
- 4. Tripods / Quadpods
- 5. Hearing Aids
- 6. Wheelchair
- 7. Artificial Dentures
- 8. Spectacles

6. Extent of Support

6.1 The Scheme will be fully financed (100% funded) by the Central Government from 'Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund'.

6.2 The extent of support will comprise of free of cost distribution of "Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices" commensurate with the extent of disability/infirmity that is manifested among the eligible senior citizens.

In case of multiple disabilities/infirmities, the assistive devices will be given in respect of each disability/impairment that is manifested in the same person. The Implementing Agency shall provide one year free maintenance of the aids & assisted living devices supplied by them. The average cost of all devices is likely to be Rs. 7,000/- per beneficiary. The monetary limit of the devices shall be as under:-

Type of Assistive Device	Monetary Limit
For each set of Walking Sticks; Elbow crutches; Walkers/ Crutches; Tripods / Quad-pods	Cost as notified by ALIMCO or actuals whichever is less.
For each Hearing aid	Cost as notified by ALIMCO as per para 8.2 or the actual cost, whichever is less.
For each wheelchair	Cost as notified by ALIMCO or actuals whichever is less.
For each set of Artificial Dentures	Cost as notified by ALIMCO or actuals whichever is less.
For each pair of spectacles (conforming to specification to be laid down)	Cost as notified by ALIMCO or actuals whichever is less.

6.3 The Central Government may, wherever necessary release upto 50% of the project cost to the implementing agencies in advance for commencing the project.

6.4 A maximum of Five per cent of the total expenditure of the Scheme shall be used for monitoring and evaluation and ten percent for administrative expenditure excluding cost of organizing the distribution camp. Overhead charges of a maximum Rs. 25 lakhs or actuals whichever is less for organizing the distribution camp shall be allowed to the implementing agency i.e. ALIMCO from the Scheme. PMU shall be allowed to be created in the Ministry, out of the monitoring and evaluation expenditure. PMU shall be allowed to be created at ALIMCO out of the administrative expenditure.

7. Implementation of the Scheme

7.1 A three-tier strategy for the implementation of the Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted Living Devices to senior citizens belonging to BPL category is envisaged. These tiers consist of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, the State/UT Nodal Department and the Implementation Committee at the District level. The roles and responsibilities for each tier are outlined below.

7.2 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India will be the nodal Ministry to oversee the implementation of the Scheme. The Ministry will provide financial resources and ALIMCO shall provide the technical guidance including specifications for each of the devices that are proposed to be procured. The Ministry will also set policies and procedural guidelines for the disbursement of the aids and assisted-living devices. Detailed financial and procurement guidelines and conditions for Assistance are at **Annexure-II**.

7.3 State Nodal Department

In each of the State/UT, the Social Welfare Department of the State or the Department dealing with the matters relating to welfare of Senior Citizens or Department so nominated by the State Government will serve as the nodal Department for this Scheme. The Govt. of India reserves the right to re-allocate the districts as and when necessitated to do so. Identification of the districts where the Scheme is to be implemented should focus on backward and rural areas. Priority should be accorded to senior citizens living in shelter homes etc.

7.4 The Central Government shall notify the composition of a Committee at District level for the purpose of selection of the beneficiaries, implementation and monitoring of the Scheme. The Committee shall be chaired by the Deputy Commissioner/Collector of the District, with the district Chief Medical Officer (CMO); District Social Welfare Officer or Joint Director/Deputy Director (Social Welfare)/Joint Director or equivalent at

the District level handling the matters relating to senior citizens, Joint Director or equivalent at the District level in the Department of Women & Child Development and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Zilla Parishad as member. In the case of urban areas, the concerned Municipal Commissioner would be member of the Committee.

8. Mode of Implementation

8.1 The Scheme will be implemented by the 'Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)', a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Beneficiaries in each district will be identified by the State Governments/UT Administrations through the Committee chaired by the Deputy Commissioner/District Collector. The State Government/UT Administration/District Level Committee may utilise the data of BPL beneficiaries receiving Old Age Pension under the NSAP or any other Scheme of the State/UT for identification of senior citizens belonging to BPL category. The devices will be distributed in the camp mode. The methodology for organizing the camps is at **Annexure-I**.

8.2 The ALIMCO shall publish a price list of each device mentioned in **para 5** above, along with specifications and standards as applicable. In the said price list the price of each device shall be fixed while adhering to the price cap, in respect of the device, mentioned in **para 6** of the Scheme. The said price list shall be provided by ALIMCO to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment who shall also publish the list on its website.

9. Eligibility criteria for the beneficiaries

- (i)** The person should be a Senior Citizen of India (aged 60 years and above) and possessing an Aadhaar card or should have applied for Aadhaar card and having Aadhaar enrollment acknowledgement. In case, the beneficiary does not possess an Aadhaar card, any of the specified identity documents shall be acceptable for the purpose of identification.

- (ii) the beneficiary may produce a certificate from the District Authority for eligibility or a BPL ration card or proof of receiving Old Age Pension under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) or any other Pension Scheme of the State/UT Government for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category.
- (iii) Certificate from the Medical Officer shall be required for loss of vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disability requiring use of wheelchair.
- (iv) The person should not have received the same device(s) free of cost from any Government source including local bodies and public undertakings controlled by the Government during last 3 years. However, replacement of faulty/non-functional device(s) may be allowed as an exception to this condition.
- (v) In any State/UT, out of the total number of beneficiaries, 30 per cent shall be women.
- (vi) It should be ensured that the percentage of SC/ST beneficiaries of the Scheme shall be equal to or more of their respective percentage of population in the district.

10. Awareness Generation on the Scheme

The Central and the State Governments/UT Administrations shall ensure wide publicity to the Scheme so that adequate awareness is created among the potential beneficiaries and their families as well as the general public about the existence of the Scheme and the benefits available under it.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Scheme will be monitored by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) as the nodal Ministry. The programme will be evaluated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, after one year of its implementation. The procedural formalities such as *proforma* and procedure of application, sourcing, procurement and distribution will be laid down by the implementing Agency i.e. ALIMCO, as may be suitable depending also upon the local conditions. The Central Government and ALIMCO shall be eligible to set up Project Monitoring Units. Project Monitoring Units (PMU) shall be set up in the Ministry and ALIMCO within the allocated Budget and coterminous with the Scheme, as a temporary measure.

After distribution of the assisted living devices, a sample check to the extent of 10% of the beneficiaries shall be made by the ALIMCO/implementing agencies.

12. Audit of Accounts

The accounts of the Implementing Agencies shall be subject to the audit by the prescribed authority in accordance with the provisions of General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017, as amended from time to time, in this regard.

Annexure I to the Scheme

Standard Approved Procedure to be followed by ALIMCO in conducting camps under the Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted Living Devices for Senior Citizens belonging to BPL category.

The 'Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation' (ALIMCO) shall organize camps under the Scheme in three phases, as mentioned below:-

Phase-1 – Assessment of the number of Devices required

- (a) On receipt of written request from State Government or Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the ALIMCO shall initiate the camp activities by writing letters to the District Authorities for obtaining formal permission for the camp.
- (b) After the formal permission is granted, the ALIMCO shall visit the district for finalizing camp's venue, date, etc. On finalization of the camp's venue, date, etc. ALIMCO shall give wide publicity for proposed camps – through print media, vehicle publicity, distribution of pamphlets, putting up of banners and hoardings at strategic locations. This publicity shall be organized with the support of Block Development Officers, Anganwadi workers and Asha workers of the District. Support of reputed NGOs may also be taken by ALIMCO.
- (c) The Registered beneficiaries shall then be examined by doctors/technicians/other professionals to assess their needs and to prescribe the requisite Assistive Devices, in writing.
- (d) On completion of the assessment, the beneficiaries shall be provided with tokens wherein the aids and appliances prescribed to them.
- (e) A consolidated requirement of aids and assistive devices for a particular camp shall then be prepared by ALIMCO and provided to Logistic Department for supply of the devices to the camp's site.

Phase-2 – Distribution Camp

- (a) ALIMCO shall depute experts/technicians from various fields to ensure safe and secure 'fitment' of the devices to the beneficiaries. As per **para 2** of the Scheme, the devices shall be of high standards and conforming to the standards laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), wherever feasible. Wherever BIS standards are not feasible, the ALIMCO shall depute experts to ensure Quality Check of the device(s) and the device(s) shall be distributed only on quality certification.
- (b) On finalization of the date(s) of the camp, ALIMCO shall inform the beneficiaries about the venue of the camp and date through the designated District Authority/District Social Welfare Officer/Chief Medical Officer/Handicapped Welfare Officer. Use of mass SMS; print media; banners at strategic locations of District; advertisements in local newspapers may also be resorted to.

- (c) ALIMCO shall depute a team at least 7 working days (excluding Public Holidays) in advance of the distribution camp to the camp's site to make logistical arrangements like tents, stage, sitting arrangements, food, water, etc.
- (d) The aids and assistive devices shall be distributed to the beneficiaries as per the tokens issued to them at the assessment camps, in presence of ALIMCO's Rehabilitation Expert and Representatives from the District Administration.
- (e) After completion of the distribution camp, ALIMCO's Rehabilitation Expert shall consolidate the report and prepare distribution certificate. These distribution certificates shall be jointly attested by ALIMCO and District Administration. A copy of these jointly attested distribution certificates shall be handed over to the District Authority/District Social Welfare Officer/Chief Medical Officer/Handicapped Welfare Officer for records. The consolidated report shall be signed by the designated District Authority/District Disability Officer as a token of acknowledgement of distribution of the assistive devices.

Phase-3 – Post Distribution Activity

The list of beneficiaries to whom the Aids and Assisted Living Devices are distributed shall be uploaded on the website of ALIMCO and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with details of name, photograph, age, gender, father's / husband's name, BPL card No., Address, contact number (optional), Aadhaar no. (desirable), type of infirmity/disability, assistive device(s) prescribed and the cost of appliance(s).

After distribution of the assisted living devices, a sample checking to the extent of 10% of the beneficiaries shall be made by the ALIMCO/implementing agencies

ALIMCO shall put to use their toll free No. 18001805129 for providing feedback and for providing post camp services.

Guidelines and Conditions for Assistance

- (i) The State Governments/UT Administrations, through the implementation Committee at the District Level (as detailed in **para 7** of the Scheme), shall identify the potential beneficiaries and finalize the list of beneficiaries after ensuring that all guidelines/conditions, etc mentioned under the Scheme are followed.
- (ii) A copy of the indent shall be sent by ALIMCO to this Ministry. The implementing agency shall be entitled to administrative costs not exceeding ten per cent (10%) on the cost of devices distributed, as overheads.
- (iii) The implementing agency will maintain a register in the *proforma* prescribed in **Annexure-III** about the details of the beneficiaries and the Assistive Devices provided to them.
- (iv) The implementing agency shall maintain “Stock Registers” wherein clear details of the devices purchased and/or disbursed are maintained. Details like date of purchase, type of stock, cost, date of disbursement, beneficiary’s name, and beneficiary’s BPL card number must be entered and authenticated by the Heads of the implementing agency.
- (v) The implementing agency under the Scheme shall obtain an undertaking from the beneficiary that he/she has not received same device(s) free of cost from any Government source including local bodies and public undertakings controlled by the Government during last three years.
- (vi) The Ministry shall have the power to inspect the Implementation of the Scheme.
- (vii) Procedure for release of Final Payment : In accordance with the approved supply order and on production of the Utilisation Certificate relating to advance released, if any, and a certificate from the District

Implementation Committee regarding completion of the distribution of the devices to the beneficiaries, the balance amount shall be released to ALIMCO directly by the Ministry through electronic mode.

(viii) When the Government of India has reasons to believe that the sanction is not being utilized for the approved purpose, the amount would be recovered from the implementing agency with interest and no further assistance would be given to the agency.

(ix) The implementing agency shall maintain separate accounts of funds received and utilized from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment under the Scheme. The fund **may** be kept in a separate bank account to be operated under the Scheme.

(x) The final accounts for a financial year will be rendered through utilization certificate and audited accounts signed **by the competent authority of the Implementing Agency** (ALIMCO) within six months of the close of the financial year or before the next sanction, whichever is earlier.

Annexure-III to the Scheme

Register to be maintained by the agencies implementing the Central Sector Scheme of “Providing Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices to Senior Citizens belonging to BPL category” .

Sl. No.	Name of the Beneficiary	Photograph	Name of Father/ mother/ husband	Male/ Female	Address and Phone Number, if any.	Age	BPL Ration Card No.	Aadhaar Card no.	Type of Aids given	Total Cost of the Aids given	Signature / Thumb impression of the Beneficiary
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)