



**REPORT OF THE
COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA
PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016**



SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTION OF INDIA
लोकहितार्थ सत्यनिष्ठा
Dedicated to Truth in Public Interest



**GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
REPORT No. 02 OF THE YEAR 2024**

**Report of the Comptroller and Auditor
General of India**

Performance audit

on

**Implementation of the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD)**

Government of Karnataka

Report No.02 of the year 2024

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Preface

This Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been prepared for submission to the Governor of Karnataka under Article 151 (2) of the Constitution to be tabled in the State Legislature.

The Report covering the period 2016-22 contains the results of performance audit of “Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016” with a specific focus on ‘Duties and Responsibilities of Appropriate Governments.

The instances mentioned in this Report are those, which came to notice in the course of test audit for the period 2016-22 as well as those which came to notice in earlier years but could not be reported in the previous Audit Reports; matters relating to the period subsequent to 2016-22 have also been included, wherever necessary.

Audit has been conducted in conformity with the Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Audit wishes to acknowledge the cooperation received from the Department of Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens at each stage of the audit process.

Executive summary

Why CAG did this audit?

The Differently Abled persons are those who are either born with disability or the victims of circumstances for reasons beyond their control, and the resultant misfortune places them in a disadvantageous position as compared to the able persons. As per Census 2011, Karnataka has 13.24 lakh people suffering from disabilities, which is 4.94 *per cent* of the total Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the Country (2.68 crore). Lack of facilities and opportunities prevent disabled persons from gaining suitable education, special training and skilled employment. State Government is striving for providing facilities and opportunities.

The RPWD Act was enacted in December 2016 in place of PwD Act 1995 to promote and protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities in various aspects of life – educational, social, legal, economic, cultural and political.

The Performance Audit (PA) was undertaken with reference to the provisions of the RPWD Act to assess the effectiveness of the Government interventions in providing rehabilitation, education, economic opportunities, barrier free environment and other supporting services to the PwDs so as to enable their integration within the mainstream of society.

Major Audit Findings

Delayed notification of the Karnataka Persons with Disability Rules delayed implementation of the Act and Rules. The Department failed to conduct a comprehensive survey covering all disabilities due to which it did not have a database on the number of persons with various disabilities in the State. Only 46 *per cent* of the differently abled persons were issued with Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities (UDID) cards which helps in tracking the benefits availed and facilitating monitoring and future planning.

Non-establishment of District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRCs) Day Care Centres and Early Intervention Centres in all the districts, failure to identify and notify designated authorities for implementation of the Act highlights the absence of appropriate mechanism for rehabilitation of PwDs. Accessibility continued to be a major hurdle for PwDs in the State. The State Government was yet to provide accessible infrastructure in many of the Government institutions, public transport, regular and special schools, libraries and tourist places.

Though Special schools were established for various categories of students with disabilities, performance of many of these institutions was far from satisfactory in terms of availability of infrastructure, accessibility features, qualification of teachers, continued vacancies *etc.*

The State Government brought out an exclusive reservation policy of mandatory appointment in each group of posts meant to be filled with persons with benchmark disabilities in September 2020 after a lapse of four years of implementation of the RPWD Act. Though an expert committee was constituted to identify the posts in the various Departments five years ago, but the Committee is yet to submit its report (December 2022). Non-submission of the report led to non-identification of the posts in various departments.

Due to absence of awareness initiatives, the exclusive benefits available under five *per cent* budget reservation was not completely availed and did not figure in any monitoring and reporting system.

The Human resources available for implementation and monitoring of the various schemes at the State and district level and in the institutions established for the upliftment of PwDs *etc.*, were insufficient. Capacity building was either absent or inadequate. The State Government lost opportunity to avail Central Government grants by non-implementation of schemes. Due to the absence of a designated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy for special schools by the State Government, corporate involvement in enhancing infrastructural facilities is limited to Bengaluru.

What CAG recommends

1: The State Government should prepare comprehensive database by conducting a detailed survey with experts' engagement capturing details of PwDs under 21 categories. It should also ensure that all the identified PwDs are issued with Unique ID cards with consent linking to Aadhaar for DBT under State/Central Scheme.

2: The State Government should strengthen the institutional mechanism to address the needs of the PwDs and ensure that provisions of the Act/Rules are strictly followed through identified and notified authorities for speedy implementation of RPWD Act 2016.

3: The State Government should ensure that local authorities make the mandatory contributions, and all disabilities are covered.

4. The State Government should accord top priority and step up its efforts to ensure that all public buildings, public transport and public places are provided with barrier free access to PwDs.

5: The State Government must ensure that all Intellectual Disability schools follow uniform syllabus (FACP), fill up the posts of occupational/physiotherapist on priority basis and provide accessible infrastructure in all schools.

6: The State Government needs to ensure availability of hearing aids, audio books and equipment in all institutions for overall improvement of PwDs.

7: The State Government should ensure that schemes are aimed at providing self-employment opportunities supported by MSME/NHFDC.

8: The State Government should implement Niramaya health insurance scheme and consider payment of renewal amount by Government itself to ensure adequate and affordable health services to PwDs. Further, insurance scheme for parents/guardians should be improvised in providing additional financial benefits to the members/subscribers.

9: The State Government should address staff shortage, improve infrastructure facilities and establish DDRCs in all districts to strengthen rehabilitation mechanism. It should bring DDRCs under the control of DDWOs for effective functioning of DDRCs.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter-I: Introduction

Lack of ability or any restriction to perform an activity in a manner or within the range considered normal for the human beings, resulting from impairment is termed as disability. Impairment concerns the physical aspects of health and disability is the loss of functional capacity resulting from an impaired organ. Handicap is a measure of the social and cultural consequences of an impairment or disability. Early identification of development delays or disabilities reduces the chances of its progression to severe disability. Hence, timely intervention is a vital component in the rehabilitation of disabled. Disabled individuals in the community face many social problems and are being neglected in the community because of inaccessibility to services and lack of opportunities like health services, schools, vocational education programs, and jobs.

Article 41 of the Indian Constitution mandates the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to education, work and public assistance for people affected by disability within the constraints of its economic capacity and level of development. Also, non-inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the development process has several implications as stigma of disability may result in loss of income and additional cost to the PwDs, for their care providers and other family members.

1.1 The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 (UNCRPD). The Government of India (GoI), to give effect to the principles laid down in the said Convention enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act) with effect from 27 December 2016 by replacing the “Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, (PwD Act)” and framed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 (June 2017). Some of the important provisions of the RPWD Act are highlighted below:

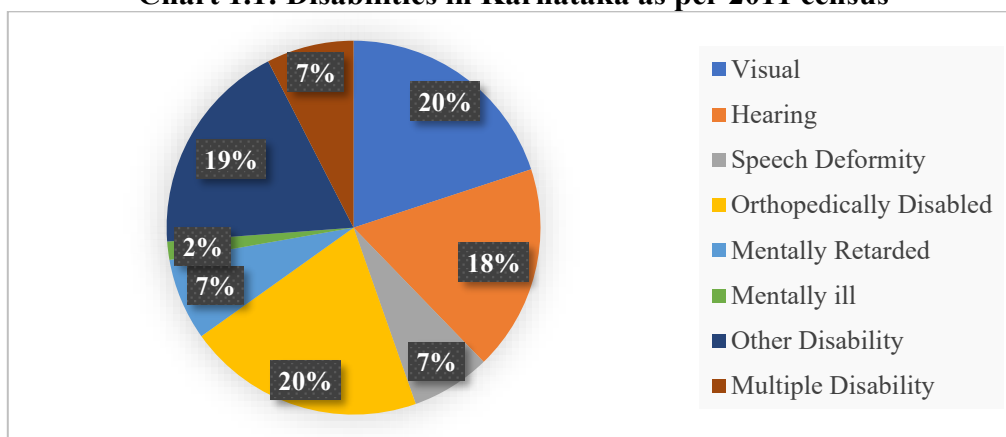
- Covers 21 disabilities as against seven disabilities in the PwD Act.
- Increase in reservations from three *per cent* to four *per cent* in Government establishments for certain persons or class of persons with benchmark disability.
- Right to free education for every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 to 18 years.
- Five *per cent* reservation in allotment of agricultural land and housing in all relevant schemes, poverty alleviation programmes and development programmes.
- Constitution of District level committees by the State Governments to address local concerns of PwDs.
- Designation of Special Courts in each district to handle cases concerning violation of rights of PwDs.
- Setting up of Central and State Advisory Boards on Disability to serve as apex policy-making bodies at the Central and State level.
- Providing incentives that are within the limits of their economic capacity to establishments to ensure that at least five *per cent* of the work force comprises of persons with benchmark disability.
- Constitution of a State Fund for PwDs in consultation with Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
- Additional thrust on activities such as awareness campaigns, access to transport, grievance redressal, social audit *etc.*

Apart from the above, the RPWD Act includes a dedicated chapter for rights and entitlements which include equality and non-discrimination, community life, protection against cruelty and inhumane treatment, protection from abuse, violence and exploitation, protection and safety in situations of risk, armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, reproductive rights, access to voting, access to justice, legal capacity, provision of guardianship *etc.*, (Chapter II). The Act also mandates the appropriate Governments to frame schemes and programmes in the areas of social security, healthcare, rehabilitation, research and development, culture and recreation, sporting activities, skill development *etc.*, for effective empowerment and inclusion of PwDs (Chapter V).

1.2 Demographic Profile

As per Census 2011, Karnataka has 13.24 lakh people with disabilities, which is 4.94 *per cent* of the total PwDs in the country (2.68 crore). The PwD Act, 1995 had seven categories of disabilities that was expanded to 21 categories under the RPWD Act, 2016 to include cerebral palsy, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, acid attack victims, autism spectrum disorders, chronic neurological disorders such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease, blood disorders such as haemophilia, thalassemia, and sickle cell anaemia *etc.* The percentage share of disabilities under various categories as per 2011 census is shown in **Chart 1.1**.

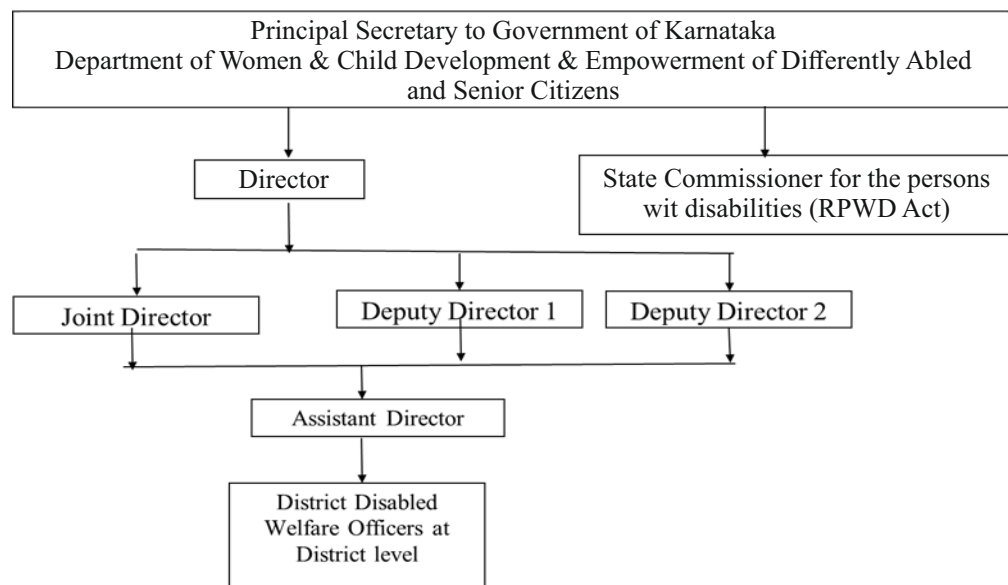
Chart 1.1: Disabilities in Karnataka as per 2011 census



1.3 Organisation setup

In Karnataka, the Department of Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens (DEDASC) is responsible for providing rehabilitation, education, economic opportunities, barrier free environment and other supporting services to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society.

The Organogram of the Department is as shown below:



The Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens (DEDASC), which functions under the administrative control of the Principal Secretary, Women and Child Development and Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens Department is headed by the Director, who is assisted by a Joint Director, two Deputy Directors, an Assistant Director and District Disability Welfare Officers (DDWO) as the implementing Officers at District Level.

In addition, an independent office of the State Commissioner for PwD, established (March 1998) under the PwD Act, 1995 is responsible for

- Monitoring the implementation of the RPWD Act;
- Monitoring the utilization of funds disbursed by the State Government;
- Safeguarding the rights and facilities made available to PwDs;
- Submitting reports to the Central and State Governments on the implementation of the Act; and
- Looking into complaints relating to deprivation of rights of PwDs;
- Inquire, *suo motu* or otherwise deprivation of rights of persons with disabilities and safeguards available to them in respect of matters for which the State Government is the appropriate Government and take up the matter with appropriate authorities for corrective action;

1.4 Audit objectives

The present Performance Audit (PA) seeks to ascertain, with reference to the provisions of the RPWD Act, whether -

1. Proper planning for identification and verification of the PwDs along with appropriate rehabilitation measures were in place;
2. Adequate measures were undertaken to ensure access to means of empowerment of PwDs; and
3. Existing system of governance including financial management, monitoring and internal control system were effective.

1.5 Audit criteria

The criteria for the PA were derived from the following:

- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995
- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) (Karnataka) Rules, 2003 as amended from time to time
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rule, 2017
- Karnataka Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2019
- Scheme notifications and guidelines
- Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
- National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999
- Annual plans of the Department and Annual Reports of the State Commissioner
- Instructions and guidelines issued by the Government/competent authority from time to time.

1.6 Audit scope and methodology

The PA was conducted for the period 2016-17 to 2020-21 during November 2020 to July 2021 and updated up to March 2022 from October 2022 to January 2023.

Audit methodology involved collection of data through document analysis in the Secretariat, Directorate and 11¹ District offices and seeking a response to audit enquiries /questionnaires / proforma besides conducting joint inspection of 70 out of 111 test-checked institutions/schools maintained by the Government and NGOs in selected districts.

An entry conference was held on 11 December 2020 with the Commissioner to discuss the audit objectives, criteria, scope and methodology. The audit findings were discussed with the Director in the exit conference held on 09 February 2023. The response of the Government to the Draft Audit Report (May 2023) and their comments in the exit conference have been suitably incorporated in this Report.

1.7 Acknowledgement

Audit acknowledges the cooperation and assistance extended by the officers and staff of the DEDASC, the State Commissioner and the test checked institutions in conducting the audit.

¹ Bengaluru Urban, Bidar, Belagavi, Bagalakote, Chitradurga, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan Haveri, Mysuru, Raichur and Ramanagara.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chapter-II: Planning and Financial Management

The State Government delayed notifying the RPWD Rules which led to delayed implementation of the Act and Rules. The Department failed to conduct a comprehensive survey covering all disabilities as mentioned in the RPWD Act due to which it did not have a database on the number of persons with various disabilities. Failure to make UDID cards mandatory and fixing a time frame to obtain UDID cards, was dissuading PwDs to go for UDID cards. The Department failed to utilise the entire funds provided for the empowerment and rehabilitation of the PwDs. The State Government failed to avail of the central assistance and therefore had to incur expenditure from out of its own sources. Without adequate monitoring mechanism, the reservation of funds in the budgetary allocations of other departments prescribed or its utilisation were not ensured, thereby depriving the rightful benefits to the disabled persons. The institutional mechanism established in the State for implementation of the provisions of the Act and Rules existing from time to time was inadequate and lacking in its efforts.

Non-conducting social audit and periodical internal audit to ensure adherence to its policies, plans and guidelines prescribed for implementation of the schemes led to ineffective monitoring of implementation of the Act by the office of State Commissioner.

2.1 Planning

Planning ensures efficient utilization of resources, timely compliance to policies, preparedness in execution of schemes and facilitates informed decision making. It involves stakeholder engagement and setting clear objectives and targets.

Office of State Commissioner for RPWD Act in-coordination with Department should list specific, measurable goals and targets. Planning should also include a reasonable time frame for these tasks to be accomplished as implementation of Act needs coordination of both the offices. Audit observed lack of coordination between both the offices as a result of which, pace of implementation of the provisions of the Act was slow such as delay in notification of rules, non-conducting survey of disabled persons, delay in issue of Unique Disability ID (UDID) cards for Persons with Disabilities, non-establishment of District Early Intervention Centres, non-framing Corporate Social Responsibility policy to ensure better infrastructural facilities in schools as detailed in succeeding paras.

2.1.1 Delay in notification of State Rules

Section 101 of the RPWD Act stipulated framing of Rules by the State Governments for carrying out the provisions of the Act, not later than six months from the date of the commencement of the Act. Audit observed that the State Government had notified the Karnataka Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2019 in August 2019 after a delay of more than two years. Consequently, the implementation of the provisions of the revised Act and Rules were delayed. This indicates that the State Government had not

accorded adequate priority for welfare of differently abled persons. The State Government (May 2023) while accepting the finding stated that lack of expertise in the field of disability and inexperience in newly identified disabilities caused delay in framing the said rules.

2.1.2 Survey for identification of persons with specific disabilities

As per Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (GoI), the main objective of the “Survey of Persons with Disabilities” is to estimate indicators of incidence and prevalence of disability, cause of disability, age at onset of disability, facilities available to the persons with disability, difficulties faced by persons with disability in accessing public building/public transport, arrangement of regular care giver, out of pocket expense relating to disability, *etc.*

Following the announcement in the budget speech for 2018-19 for provision of ₹5 crore for survey of disabled persons covering all the 21 disabilities, the State Government accorded (September 2018) sanction to incur ₹5 crore for conducting the survey. This survey would enable creation of a database of PwDs.

Audit observed that neither the Government nor the State Commissioner had prescribed any guidelines for conducting the survey. Capturing details of all types of disabilities required the services of medical experts. The Department without engaging any experts conducted (February-March 2021) the survey through Village Rehabilitation Workers² (VRWs) at Gram Panchayat (GP) level and captured details of eight to nine disabilities instead of 21 disabilities. Further, in Bengaluru Urban district, the survey conducted was negligible as only 3,860 disabled persons were surveyed as against 2.74 lakh disabled persons as per Census 2011. The incomplete coverage rendered the survey ineffective and did not serve the intended purpose. As a result, the Department did not have comprehensive data on the number of persons with each of the 21 disabilities identified under the RPWD Act even after six years of the Act coming into force.

Further, Section 17 (a) of the RPWD Act mandates the appropriate Government and local authorities to conduct survey of school going children once in every five years for identification of children with disabilities, ascertaining their special needs and the extent to which these are being met. The first survey, to be conducted within a period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act, is yet to be done (March 2023). The State Government did not offer its comments. The failure of the Government to carry out the survey results in a large population of persons with disability being deprived of welfare measures which would empower them.

² A disabled person in the 18-45 age group, who studied up to class 10 and is staying within that gram panchayat, is appointed as VRW.

2.1.3 Non-availability of database

The PwD and RPWD Acts provide for creating educational, employment, and rehabilitation opportunities by the State Governments, which are being carried out through implementation of the various schemes. Consequently, the Department is required to maintain data regarding the number of PwDs in the State, the benefits availed from Government including scholarships, pensions and other financial assistance for setting up projects, and the details for various schemes introduced by the Central and State Governments *etc.*

Audit observed that the Department did not have a comprehensive database of the PwDs, the schemes implemented, the benefits availed *etc.*, which would have enabled the planning process, monitoring and decision making.

The State Government stated that Department had decided to implement all the beneficiary-oriented schemes through online portal.

The reply of the Government does not address the requirement of the database of PwDs which would enable smoother and official implementation of the schemes for PwDs.

2.1.4 Delay in issue of Unique ID for Persons with disabilities

GoI launched (March 2016) a project *viz.*, Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities (UDID) with a view to create a national database and build a holistic end-to-end integrated system for issuance of Universal ID and Disability Certificates for PwDs with their identification and disability details.

The Application Software provides an online platform for issuance of disability certificates. The project would encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering the Government benefits to PwDs and also help in monitoring of physical and financial progress of beneficiary at all levels of hierarchy— *i.e.*, village level, block level, District level, State level and National level. The database captures personal details, identity details, disability details (type of disability, *per cent* of disability *etc.*), education status, employment details, Income level (BPL/ APL, *etc.*) scheme related details *etc.*

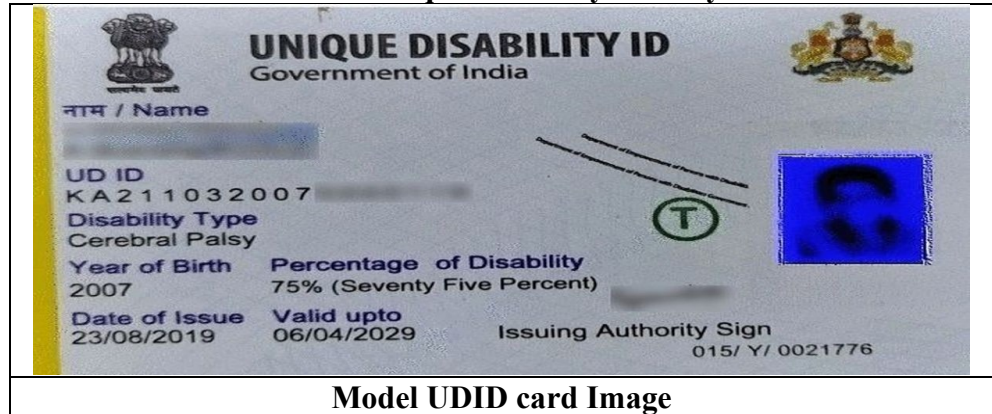
PwDs are required to register with the UDID portal. Once registered, after the login is complete, PwDs will be able to apply online for Disability Certificate and UDID card and will also be able to track the status of their application. PwDs can also request for renewal of Disability Certificate/UDID Card and request for another card in case of loss of their UDID Card. PwDs can download and print the copy of their respective Disability Certificate/UDID Card.

One of the unique features of UDID shall be the ability to locate their Chief Medical Officer Office/Medical Authority for assessment of disability, District Welfare Officer to receive assistance and to know about the various schemes for Persons with Disabilities besides, viewing latest news/announcements pertaining to disabilities.

Disability Certificate Issuing Authorities (CMO Office/Medical Authority) will use this application to record the details of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and issue Disability Certificate/UDID Card electronically. Application from the PwD will be received by the CMO Office/Medical Authority. After necessary verification, the PwDs will be referred to designated Specialist/Medical board for disability assessment and once the assessment is over, the assessment details are submitted and Disability Certificate/UDID Card will be issued electronically. As assessment has to be done by the CMO, which will take time, automating Disability Certificate/UDID Card issue process will significantly reduce the time and ensure timely delivery of the Disability Certificate/UDID Card. Sample image of UDID is shown in **Exhibit 2.1**

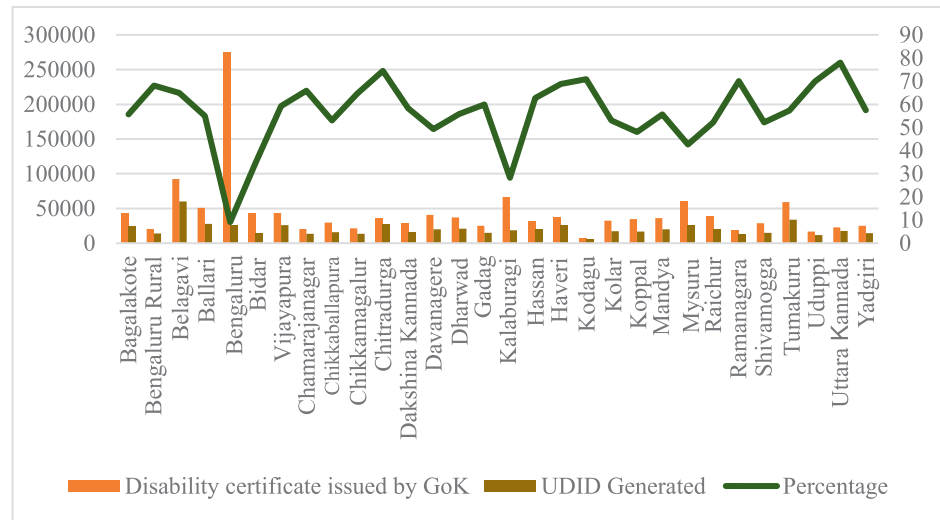
District Welfare Officer/District Social Welfare Officers shall use the UDID portal for facilitating PwDs in getting Disability Certificate/UDID Card by means of providing application receiving counter, facilitating in camps. The web portal would also facilitate smooth implementation of schemes meant for PwDs.

Exhibit 2.1. Unique Disability Identity Card



In Karnataka UDID project commenced in April 2019, Audit observed that the pace of implementation of UDID project in the State was slow. As of 31 December 2022, only 46 *per cent* of the differently abled persons were issued with UDIDs in the State.

The district-wise status of UDIDs issued as of 31 December 2022 is shown in **Chart 2.1**



Source: Information furnished by the Department

Analysis showed that while Uttara Kannada district topped the list with an achievement of 78 *per cent* of applications, Bengaluru Urban district which has a population of 2.74 lakh PwDs occupied the last position with a dismal performance of nine *per cent*. The Department also failed to initiate action to link benefits/concessions availed with UDID as suggested by GoI and practiced by other States (Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh).

The State Government, (May 2023), while mentioning that 8.11 lakh out of 9.90 lakh received applications were disposed of, stated that a joint circular was issued (August 2022) for expeditious distribution of Unique Identity Card after holding a meeting with the officials of Health and Family Welfare Department and a nodal officer was appointed by the Department for the progress of this project.

While the State Government's strides in processing applications for the Unique Identity Card are notable, the fact remains that 1.79 lakh applications are still pending without disposal. A comprehensive review of the process, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of implemented measures is imperative. This scrutiny is essential to offer a thorough response and to ensure efficient delivery of quality services to the disabled.

Recommendation 1: The State Government should prepare comprehensive data base by conducting a detailed survey with expert engagement capturing details of PwDs under 21 categories. It should also ensure that all the identified PwDs are issued with Unique ID cards with consent linking to Aadhaar for DBT under State/Central Scheme.

2.1.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a strategic philanthropy linked with responsibility and veering towards community development through various projects and looking beyond financial performance, and to integrate social and environmental concerns into their strategic management. The Companies Act,

2013 mandates providing a contribution of two *per cent* of the average net profits (for companies having ₹5 crore as net profit for a year). One of the suggested areas of activity as per Schedule VII was promoting special education and employment enhancing vocation skills especially among the differently abled and livelihood enhancement projects.

Audit scrutiny revealed that CSR funds for special educational schools were primarily concentrated in Bengaluru with only seven institutes receiving grants amounting to ₹207.65 crore during 2016-17 to 2021-22.

The Department had neither framed any guidelines to ensure equitable distribution of funds across the State nor encouraged corporates to invest in areas outside Bengaluru. This limited the improvement of infrastructure and access to education for differently abled individuals.

Illustration

In one case of misuse of CSR funds, Karnataka Welfare Association for Blind, Bengaluru (KWAB), which is presently taking care of 37 visually impaired students, had paid a social activist/consultant ₹13.37 lakh, a whopping 45 per cent of the total CSR fund of ₹ 33.00 lakh (Cheque number: 607261 dated 26-07-2017 for ₹13,36,500) received by it. Even TDS was deducted before making payment. The consultant helps the corporates in disbursing CSR funds on commission basis. The consulting fee was returned to KWAB later (023981 dated 16-07-2018 ₹13.37 lakh) only after filing FIR (April 2018). Audit noticed that legal opinion was taken before paying fee demanded by consultant and legal experts had mentioned that it was not proper for the association to pay the said percentage or anything in excess of 10 to 15 per cent.

The State Government stated that office of State Commissioner had requested (March 2023) all the industrial sectors, banking sectors to create platform for CSR support for PwDs and a meeting also was being convened with lead bank managers and other corporate sectors to formulate guidelines to ensure the proper utilisation of CSR fund.

While the State Government's initiative to encourage CSR support for PwDs is a step in the right direction, there is a need for accountability, and accessibility in the formulation and implementation of these initiatives. By addressing these considerations, the government can ensure that CSR funds are utilised effectively to improve the lives of PwDs and promote inclusivity and equality in society.

2.2 Institutional Framework

For effective implementation of the RPWD Act, it is essential to have an efficient institutional structure. This required a revamp of the Department by posting technical persons having knowledge (persons possessing Bachelor's/Post Graduate degree in Rehabilitation Counselling, Social Work, Counselling, Psychology, Special Education or related field, with four-five years' experience working with students/people with designated disabilities

and program coordination) in disability related issues at least on outsourcing basis as was done in the UDID Project. This was, however, not done by the Department.

The institutional framework existing in the State apart from the State Commissioner is indicated in **Table 2.1**. Audit observed that the State Government belatedly constituted the committees required as per the Act. Further, meetings were not held regularly which led to non-consideration of important issues needing immediate attention such as creating awareness about the Act, recommend/monitor action taken to ensure accessibility, non-discrimination for PwDs, design disability-wise specific policies and programmes *etc.*

Table 2.1: Status of institutional structure overseeing the implementation of RPWD Act as on January 2023

Sl. No.	Section of the Act	Committee (Chairperson)	Purpose	Remarks
1	66	State Advisory Board (Minister in charge of the Department)	To advise the State Government on legislation, programmes, projects and to facilitate the continuous evolution of a comprehensive policy for the empowerment of PwDs and the full enjoyment of rights	Constituted in March 2018. Conducted only one virtual meeting in July 2020. No follow-up action is taken thereafter on the decisions taken in the meeting.
2	72	District Level Committee on disability	To perform such functions as prescribed by State Government	Formed between October 2019 and November 2020 in 27 districts of the State, and meetings were conducted in 10 districts out of 11 test checked districts.
3	79(7)	State Level Advisory Committee comprising of not more than five members drawn from experts in the disability sector	To assist the State Commissioner in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government	Constituted in December 2018. The Committee conducted a meeting only once in June 2019.
4	23	Grievance Redressal Officer	To register grievances/complaints, investigate it and take up the matter with the establishment for corrective action.	No Grievance Redressal Officer was appointed.

Source: Information furnished by the Department

The State Government stated that proposal was submitted to hold State Level Advisory Board and all Departments concerned were instructed to obtain compliance reports on the issues discussed in meeting held in July 2020. However, compliance reports are yet to be received. Further, it was also stated that District Level Committees were set up in 30 districts and all District Level Committees were directed to submit progress reports to State Commissioner.

The office of the State Commissioner for RPWD Act had also conducted the State Level Advisory Committee meeting (August 2022) at the All-India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH) Mysuru to discuss the issues for implementation of the Act.

In respect of appointment of Grievance Redressal Officer, State Government stated that following issue (January 2023) of a circular directing Departments/Boards/Corporations/Commissions to appoint a Grievance

Redressal Officer as per the provisions of the Act, most of the State Government Departments Boards and Corporations had appointed the grievance redressal officers.

From the above it is evident that actions were taken only at the instance of audit which indicates that institutional intervention of the Department was not effective / or absent for the implementation of the various schemes.

2.2.1 State Commissioner for PwDs

2.2.1.1 Appointment of State Commissioner

As per provisions of Section 79 of the Act, there shall be a State Commissioner for PwDs for the implementation of this Act. After the completion of the term of the State Commissioner in February 2021, the Director of the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens is functioning as in-charge Commissioner. Even though notifications are being issued from time to time, the post is yet to be filled (May 2023).

As per Section 60 of PwD Act, 1995 and Section 79 of the RPWD Act 2016, 'a person shall not be qualified for appointment as the State Commissioner unless he has special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to rehabilitation'.

Audit also noticed that since inception of the Office of the State Commissioner for PwDs in January 1999, only 5 out of 17 officers appointed as Commissioners were persons with special knowledge or practical experience in matters relating to rehabilitation. The remaining 12 were officers of the State Government, such as Principal Secretaries and Directors. Even the post of Assistant Commissioner was being filled up from other Departments. Thus, the objective of Act to appoint specially qualified officers to the top management was not adhered to on many occasions.

The State Government stated that as the applications for eligible candidates were invited for the post of State Commissioner, filling the State Commissioner Post is under process. However, the fact remains that office of State Commissioner has remained vacant for the last 27 months, since February 2021.

2.2.1.2 Functioning of the State Commissioner

(a) As per Section 80 of the RPWD Act, the State Commissioner shall (a) identify, *suo moto* or otherwise, provision of any law or policy, programme and procedures, which are inconsistent with this Act, and recommend necessary corrective steps; and (b) inquire, *suo moto* or otherwise deprivation of rights of PwDs and safeguards available to them in respect of matters for which the State Government is the appropriate Government and take up the matter with appropriate authorities for corrective action.

As per Section 81, whenever the State Commissioner makes a recommendation to an authority in pursuance of Section 80, that authority shall take necessary action on it, and inform him of the action taken within three months from the date of receipt of the recommendation and in case

authority does not accept a recommendation, it has to convey reasons for non-acceptance to the State Commissioner and the aggrieved person within the period of three months.

The State Commissioner as part of his duties visits the districts and reviews the implementation of the Act in force and recommends necessary corrective steps. However, the proceedings of the meetings with the district heads/authorities of the departments were not being prepared and kept on record, as a result, there was no follow up on the recommendations.

Audit further observed that the State Commissioner was not uploading the details of all the cases registered and disposed of on the website of the department on the lines of the Chief Commissioner for PwDs of GoI.

In respect of cases registered and judgements delivered, the action taken by the departments concerned on the recommendation of the State Commissioner within three months was not on record and follow up action was also not taken by the office of State Commissioner; thereby, the entire process of registering of cases and delivering of judgements had become, by and large, ineffective. The State Government did not offer its comments.

(b) Section 40 to 45 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 states that Chief Commissioner should formulate rules for persons with disabilities laying down the standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications.

Scrutiny of the records in the office of the Commissioner, audit observed an instance of accessibility problems such as accessible pathways for PwDs, braille numbers in elevators, specific parking slots for PwDs *etc.*, in a private residential building.

The State Commissioner (September 2020) instructed the owners of the apartments to create necessary barrier free features as per RPWD Act to ensure that rights of PwDs are protected and directed the Department to issue notifications to the Local Authorities to ensure that before issuing the Occupancy Certificates to the multi-storeyed buildings, had to provide accessible pathways for PwDs, braille numbers in elevators, specific parking slots for PwDs *etc.*, and the rights of PwDs are protected.

The State Government stated that the State Commissioner for RPWD Act-directed owner of prominent residential welfare association to provide the necessary accessibility in the said building. However, the reply was silent about whether owner of the building had complied with the directions.

2.2.2 Committee for Research on Disability

In accordance with Section 6 of the RPWD Act, no person with a disability shall be made a subject of any research without the acquisition of their free and informed consent through accessible modes, means, and formats of communication, and without the prior permission of a Committee for Research on Disability. The Committee is to be constituted with the Chairperson being

an eminent person with vast experience in the field of science and medical research, along with members nominated for the purpose. The Committee shall frame guidelines on timeline and research norms subject to approval of the Government.

Audit observed that the State Government had not constituted a Committee for Research on Disability despite a lapse of two and a half years since framing of Rules. As a result, detailed guidelines prescribing the procedure to be followed for conducting clinical investigations/research through obtaining consent before making any PwD for a subject of research, were not in place.

The State Government stated that the proposal submitted by the Department (February 2023) to constitute a committee for research on disability is under process.

2.2.3 Equal Opportunity Policy

As per Section 21 of RPWD Act, every establishment is to notify equal opportunity policy for PwDs detailing measures proposed to be taken by it as per the Act and is to register a copy of the said policy with the State Commissioner. Rule 8 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 of GoI mandate that every establishment shall publish equal opportunity policy for persons with disabilities and shall display the equal opportunity policy preferably on their website, failing which, at conspicuous places in their premises.

Every establishment (Further, the policy of private establishments having twenty or more employees and all the Government establishments) is to contain provisions for assistive devices/barrier free accessibility, appointment of liaison officer, identification of posts for PwDs and facilities and amenities to be provided for such employees.

Though the State Government brought out the Karnataka State Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2019 (KRPWD Rules) and stipulated publishing of equal opportunity policy and its display, it was silent on the other provisions of the Act mentioned above. Consequently, there was no binding on private establishments to maintain the details of PwDs appointed and facilities and amenities provided to them. Audit also observed that these establishments had not registered the copy of the policy with the State Commissioner.

On being pointed out by Audit, the State Government stated that office of the State Commissioner had issued (March 2023) a circular along with guidelines about the procedure to be followed by every establishment to publish the equal opportunity policy.

2.2.4 Authority for PwDs with high support needs

Person with disability having High Support needs means a person with benchmark disability who needs intense support - physical, psychological or otherwise, to carry out activities of daily living, access facilities/services and

to take decisions including education, employment, family, treatment, community life and therapy.

As per Section 38 of RPWD Act and Rule 14A of RPWD Rules 2017, any person with benchmark disability, who considers himself to need high support may apply to an authority, to be notified by the appropriate Government, requesting to provide high support. On receipt of an application, the authority shall refer it to an Assessment Board consisting of District Chief Medical Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, five rehabilitation specialists, Occupational therapist or Speech therapist or Clinical psychologist or Physiotherapist (as per requirement) as may be prescribed by the State Government. The Assessment Board invites the applicant for clinical assessment and sends a report to the authority certifying the need of high support and its nature and on receipt of a report, the authority shall take steps to provide support in accordance with the report.

Audit observed that the KRPWD Rules neither notified the authority to whom a person with benchmark disability could apply for high support requirement nor had specified the procedure to be adopted in such instances. This omission resulted in depriving the persons with benchmark disabilities of high support.

The State Government (May 2023) stated that it had notified (November 2022) the authority and assessment board as per the provisions of the Act to provide high support to the needy disabled persons. Further, it was stated that the office of State Commissioner had also issued directions (May 2023) to district authorities to constitute the assessment boards. However, the reply is silent about whether district authorities had constituted assessment boards or are initiating steps to constitute assessment boards as per directives.

2.2.5 Human Resource Management

2.2.5.1 Inadequate Human Resources

As per the information furnished by the Director, out of the total 464 sanctioned posts, only 162 posts were filled up, and the balance of 302 posts were vacant as of 31 March 2023. The status of sanctioned strength and men in position in the Department is indicated in **Table 2.2**

Table 2.2: Status of sanctioned and working strength of the Department (2022-23)

Cadre	Sanctioned strength	Person in position	Vacant	Remarks
Director	01	01	00	These posts were temporary posts and not permanent posts and were filled up through deputation from other Departments.
Joint Director	01	01	00	
Deputy Director	02	00	02	
Assistant Director	01	00	01	
District Disabled Welfare Officers /Superintendent	35	14	21	The 21 vacant posts are managed by in charge staff and staff from WCD and other Departments

Cadre	Sanctioned strength	Person in position	Vacant	Remarks
Superintendent – Special Schools	08	00	08	-
Non-Gazetted Assistants	12	05	07	-
Programme Assistants / First Division Assistants	51	32	19	06 posts of Programme Assistants are filled through deputation
Graduate Assistants	34	15	19	-
Vocational/Computer Teachers	09	01	08	-
Second Division Assistant / Warden / Storekeeper	39	19	20	-
Others	271	74	197	-
Total	464	162	302	-

Source: Information furnished by the Department

As can be seen from the above, 60 *per cent* of the vacant posts in the cadres of DDWO/Superintendent were filled up either through in charge arrangements or through deputation. The Superintendent post in all the special schools were vacant. Similarly, the posts of Director, Joint director, Deputy directors are filled through deputation from other Departments. As a result, audit observed that the officers recruited as DDWO, which is a Group B post, continue to remain as DDWOs without any promotional opportunity.

Resorting to in charge or stopgap arrangements, especially at the district level in Departments which deal with the vulnerable sections of the society may slow down the effective functioning of the departments in implementation and monitoring the activities as laid down in the Acts/Rules.

The State Government stated (May 2023) that action would be taken to fill up all the vacant posts as per norms.

2.2.5.2 Capacity Building

As per Section 47 of the RPWD Act, mandatory training is to be imparted on disability rights in all courses for training of stakeholders and care providers such as Asha workers, Anganwadi workers, colleges and University teachers, doctors, nurses, para-medical personnel, rural development officers *etc.*, on caregiving and support.

This required the State Government/Department to prepare suitable plan of action to conduct the necessary trainings for all the concerned, coordinate with the Education Department to ensure that disability as a component was introduced in education courses at all levels and associate with research institutions to design courses specially for the parents and family members to train them to effectively handle PwDs and develop communication and language skills in their children.

Audit observed that neither the State Government nor the Department had initiated any such measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of RPWD Act. As a result, disability as a component in education courses was

not introduced, and training courses for parents and family members to effectively handle PwDs were not framed.

The State Government stated that the first batch of District Welfare Officers were trained in Administrative Training Institute (ATI) Mysuru during 2022-23. Besides, it was also proposed to establish Sheltered workshop to provide vocational training to persons with intellectual disability.

2.2.6 Internal Control

Internal controls refer to the systematic review of procedures framed by the Department to comply with Act/Guidelines to ensure adherence to its policies and plans and the overall purpose of internal control is to help the Department to achieve its mission and to accomplish goals and objectives.

Audit observed absence of internal controls and deficiencies in the monitoring system, which led to non-compliance of various provisions of the Act despite lapse of more than six years since its introduction in December 2016. Detailed observations are brought out in the succeeding paragraphs in this chapter.

2.2.6.1 Social Audit and Internal Audit

Section 48 of the RPWD Act mandates the appropriate Government to undertake social audit of all general schemes and programmes involving the PwDs to ensure that the scheme and programmes do not have an adverse impact upon them and requirements and concerns of PwDs are taken into account. Audit observed that the State Commissioner had not forwarded any proposals to the Government for conducting social audit during the period under review.

Further, periodical internal audit of district offices and 211 schools/institutions working under the jurisdiction of DEDASC were not conducted to ensure adherence to its policies and plans at periodical intervals.

Audit also observed the State Government had not issued instruction to monitor the functioning of these institutions periodically. However, the department was conducting annual inspections to assess the eligibility of schools/institutions for release of grants on regular basis.

The State Government, while accepting audit observation, stated that as the State Commissioner officer and the Directorate DEDSC did not have separate audit wing, the internal audit of the district offices was not conducted at regular intervals and stated that steps would be taken to establish separate audit wing in the Directorate.

2.2.6.2 Absence of Standard Operating Procedure Manual

Since the Department deals with different types of institutions to cater to the needs of the PwDs, a Standard Operating Procedure Manual ought to have been prepared by the Department to ensure uniform standards across institutions serving PwDs. This manual should detail qualifications for

teaching and non-teaching staff, classroom designs, and seating arrangements suitable for students with disabilities. Additionally, it should specify required physiotherapy equipment, such as trampoline, balance ball, CP chair, cycle/walker, physiotherapy tables and finger ladders accessibility features for school and hostel structures, and appropriate teacher-to-pupil ratios based on disability types. Furthermore, the manual must address syllabus development for various disability categories and establish regular internal audit schedules for institutions, including DDWO offices, within the Department's jurisdiction.

Audit observed that the Department had not initiated steps to prepare such a manual for all stakeholders (NGOs) involved in it. Consequently, different institutions were following different types of practices in teaching methods especially when dealing with Intellectual Disability students as discussed earlier, besides not complying with the minimum accessibility features in buildings such as ramp with railings and specially designed toilets for disabled children.

Recommendation 2: The State Government should strengthen the institutional mechanism to address the needs of the PwDs and ensure that provisions of the Act/Rules are strictly followed through identified and notified authorities for speedy implementation of RPWD Act, 2016.

2.3 Financial Management

The budget allocation, releases, and expenditure thereon by the DEDASC during the period 2017-18 to 2022-23 is indicated in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Budget Allocation, Releases and Expenditure

(₹ in crore)

Year	Budget provision	Releases	Expenditure	Savings	Per cent of savings to releases
2017-18	198.10	198.10	168.72	29.38	15
2018-19	162.04	162.04	138.96	23.08	14
2019-20	195.46	186.14	160.00	26.14	14
2020-21	199.38	199.38	167.81	31.57	16
2021-22	177.81	177.40	168.20	9.20	05
2022-23	254.57	253.89	235.31	18.58	07
Total	1,187.36	1,176.95	1,039	137.95	12

Source: Information furnished by the Department

Audit observed that non-utilisation of funds under various schemes such as Aadhara, Niramaya, distribution of motorised vehicles *etc.*, were the reasons for savings.

Major schemes along with details of expenditure for the period 2017-18 to 2022-23 being implemented by the State Government are detailed in **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Details of Major Schemes implemented by the Government.

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Objective of the Scheme	Funds released	Actual expenditure
1	Child Centric Scheme	Grants based on students' strength under Child Centric Scheme are provided to NGOs running residential and non-residential Special schools.	362.71	333.61
2	1982 GIA Scheme	GIA in the form of salaries on par with State Government Teachers is provided to Organizations imparting special education.	96.88	96.88
3	Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme	The scheme provides the beneficiaries with medical insurance coverage up to ₹1.00 lakh per year based on onetime payment of ₹250 as premium.	0.31	0.25
4	Adhara Scheme	ADHARA loan scheme is being implemented to enable the disabled people to take up self-employment and live a life. Under this scheme, 50 per cent bank loan and 50 per cent subsidy is provided by the Department	14.32	10.70
5	Motorized Two-Wheeler for Persons with Physically Disability	Persons in the age group of 20-60 years with severe physical disabilities and hailing from families with income less than ₹2.00 lakh per annum will be provided motorized two wheelers once in a life time, to the eligible beneficiaries	75.93	75.93
6	DDRC Scheme	The main objective of the programme is to identify and provide comprehensive total rehabilitation service at the doorstep of the beneficiaries under single window system.	14.05	14.16
7	Aids and Appliances to disabled persons:	Under this scheme, aids and appliances are distributed to the Persons with Disability whose family income is less than ₹11,500/- per annum in rural areas and ₹24,000/- in urban areas.	14.63	13.09
		Total	578.83	544.62

Source: Information furnished by the Department

The deficiencies in implementation of the schemes are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

2.3.1 Constitution of State Fund for PwDs.

As per Section 88 of RPWD Act, 2016, the State Government has to constitute a State Fund for persons with disabilities which should be utilised and managed as per the procedure prescribed by the State Government in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

As per Rule 41 of KSRPWD 2019, all sums received by way of grant, gifts, donations, benefactions, bequests or transfers and all sums received from the State Government including grants-in-aid are to be credited to the State Fund created and utilised and managed in the areas which are not specifically covered under any scheme and where any programmes of the State

Government are not adequately funded under any scheme or programme of the Central Government.

Audit observed that the State Fund for persons with disabilities had not been constituted. Records indicated that the Department had not initiated any steps to appraise the State Advisory Board who in turn will to advise and make recommendations to the State Government to issue notification for constitution of State Fund for PwDs.

The State Government stated that a Government Order was issued in March 2020 for constitution of State Fund for PwDs and necessary guidelines are being prepared for implementation of the scheme.

2.3.2 Reservation in schemes and development programmes

Section 37 of RPWD Act mandates the appropriate Government and local authorities to make schemes in favour of persons with benchmark disabilities by notification to provide for five *per cent* reservation in allotment of agricultural land and housing, poverty alleviation and other development schemes, and allotment of land on concessional rate for the purpose of housing, shelter, occupation, business, enterprise, recreation centres and production centres. The State Government reiterated (August 2018) that all Urban local bodies have to mandatorily allot five *per cent* of their budget for PwDs.

Audit observed that the Department did not possess the data of the beneficiaries who had availed the benefits under various schemes and programmes as the local authorities had not prepared and forwarded their action plans to the Department. Further it was seen that the Department did not have a system in place to monitor the mandatory allotment of funds and its utilisation thereon. Hence, even Department could not ascertain whether the stipulated five *per cent* reservation was being adhered to during the implementing the schemes. The State Government did not offer its comments.

Illustration***Study on mandatory allotment and utilisation of five per cent of budget for PwDs by the office of State Commissioner***

To ascertain the compliance and implementation of reservations prescribed as per the extant provisions of the Act, the State Commissioner had conducted (August-September 2019) a study with the support of Dhvani Foundation, Bengaluru in Davanagere and Koppala districts. The study revealed that only 0.75 per cent of funds was utilised for the benefit of PwDs from the overall budget approved/released under poverty alleviation and other development programmes. While the Rural local bodies (Zilla Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats) utilised four per cent of funds, the line Departments had utilised only 0.51 per cent. The study further noted that the benefits given were not spread across all types of disabilities and most deserving types of disabilities (Mental health and hearing impaired) were neglected. The five per cent budget reservation did not figure in any monitoring and reporting system. The study also observed that there were no significant efforts to raise the awareness among PwDs of their rights and entitlements and the field functionaries were also not suitably trained.

Recommendation 3: The State Government should ensure that local authorities make the mandatory contributions and all disabilities are covered.

2.3.3 Non-availing of Central Assistance

GoI has been implementing various schemes for providing financial assistance for undertaking various activities particularly relating to rehabilitation and provision of barrier-free accessibility features. Grant-in-aid is provided to State Governments and various bodies set up by the Central and State Government including autonomous bodies and Universities.

Further, audit also observed that there was loss of central assistance as Department had not availed Central grants in respect of first two schemes, and in respect of other four schemes, there was potential loss of central assistance as Department had not implemented it, thereby, depriving beneficiaries of intended objectives of the central schemes as detailed in **Table 2.5**.

Table 2.5: Non-availing of Central Assistance and Potential loss of Central Assistance

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Objectives	Audit Remarks
1	Central Sector Scheme of “Support for establishment / modernisation / capacity augmentation of Braille Presses”.	The GoI launched the Central Sector Scheme of “Support for establishment / modernization / capacity augmentation of Braille Presses” in November 2014.	The Department procured (June 2018) high speed computerised Braillo Embosser at a cost of ₹71.40 lakh to replace existing Braille Embosser (Braillo 400 SR) purchased during 2005 for use of Government Braille Printing Press, Mysuru. However, the Department did not submit any proposal for purchase of the said equipment under the scheme and consequently failed to avail central assistance.

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Objectives	Audit Remarks
2	Grant to the State Governments/UTs infrastructure facilities under Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA).	GoI offered (2016) a one-time grant to the State Governments/Union Territories under SIPDA for providing infrastructure facilities to the Office of the State Commissioner.	The State Government did not avail of this assistance and spent (March 2020) ₹27.50 lakh out of its own budget for providing infrastructure facilities to the Office of the State Commissioner. The State Government stated that under SIPDA scheme, there was no opportunity for renovation of the office of the State Commissioner for RPWD Act-Karnataka, hence an amount of ₹27.50 lakh was incurred from state fund for renovation of this office. The reply is not acceptable as the GoI guidelines provided for the same as a onetime grant.
3	Awareness Generation and Publicity scheme.	The GoI launched the (revised in 2015-16) with the objective of giving wide publicity, including event-based publicity through electronic, print, film media, multimedia for the schemes, programmes being run by different departments.	The Department did not implement the scheme in the State and thereby the eligible institutions were deprived of central assistance.
4	Assistance to disabled persons for purchase/fitting of aids and appliances (ADIP Scheme).	The main objective of the scheme is to assist the needy disabled persons with modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential including conduct of corrective surgeries. The beneficiaries are eligible for only those aids/appliances which do not cost more than ₹8,000 and for visually, mentally, speech and hearing or multiple disabled, the limit is ₹12,000.	The Department had not implemented the scheme in the State despite the existence of DDRCs in 16 districts. As a result, it lost the opportunity of availing central assistance. Audit observed that the Department had spent state funds of ₹12.78 crore towards purchase and distribution of assistive devices to PwDs (28,573) during the period 2016-17 to 2021-22. The State Government stated that DDRCs had not applied for grants under ADIP schemes. The reply cannot be accepted as department had failed to take proactive role in informing the DDRCs to avail of ADIP scheme benefits, as with central scheme funds in addition to State funds, more beneficiaries would be benefitted as there is always constraint on State Budget.
5	Swavlamban Chhatravas Yojana.	With a view to enhance opportunities of education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for children and youth with disabilities who due to barriers in the built-up environment and transport system, are not able to reach their places of education, GoI introduced (2015) the scheme of Swavlamban Chhatravas Yojana. Under the scheme, central assistance of up to ₹2 crore per hostel at ₹2 lakh	State Government had not sought for proposals from the districts, voluntary organisations or educational institutions under the scheme and hence did not avail of any assistance. Consequently, the State lost the opportunity of availing central assistance to provide necessary rehabilitation measures to the PwDs. Audit observed that, 35 out of 88 institutions were functioning in rented premises. The State Government stated that as the GoI had not formulated guidelines, this scheme was not implemented in the

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Objectives	Audit Remarks
		per inmate with disability as normative cost to be reviewed every three years would be provided.	State. However, reply is not acceptable as the Department had not submitted any initial proposals during 2015 and scheme was not implemented
6	Scheme of free coaching for students with disabilities.	GoI introduced (April 2017) a scheme of free coaching for students with disabilities having minimum 40 <i>per cent</i> or more disability to enable them to appear in competitive examinations / entrance examinations for admission in Engineering, Medical and Professional courses Under the scheme guidelines, fee component will be released directly to the coaching institutes in the form of GIA besides paying monthly stipend/ special allowances to students.	The State Government/Department had neither implemented this scheme in the State nor had created any awareness of the scheme for the benefit of students with disabilities. The State Government did not offer any comments.

CHAPTER III

ACCESSIBILITY

Chapter-III: Accessibility

The State Government has taken the initiatives for providing accessibility to PwDs but is yet to provide barrier free facilities in all the public buildings, initiate action to improve disabled friendly facilities in Transportation and Tourism sectors and ensure accessibility to regular and special schools conforming to the standards prescribed.

“Accessible” means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The RPWD Act through Sections 40-46 mandates accessibility to be ensured in all public centric buildings, transportation systems, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services, consumer products and all other services being provided by Government or other service providers in a time bound manner. The Act also provides for formulation of Accessibility Standards / Guidelines for incorporation across various sectors.

GoI released ₹27.09 crore for providing accessibility facilities in public buildings during 2018-19 and 2019-20. However, the State Government had not made any separate provision for allotment of funds for providing accessible features in special schools, rehabilitation homes/centres under the jurisdiction of the Department. Audit noticed that funds provided for Accessible India Campaign by GoI were not utilised optimally, accessible features were not provided by special and regular schools in its premises as discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

3.1 Accessible India Campaign

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched (December 2015) Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nation-wide campaign for achieving universal accessibility for PwDs. The campaign focusses on three important verticals, viz., the Build Environment, the Transportation Sector and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem as depicted in **Chart 3.1**.

Chart 3.1: Verticals and their objectives

3.1.1 Built Environment

For providing accessibility facilities, the GoI released ₹27.09 crore to 47 buildings (₹11.04 crore during 2018-19 for 20 buildings and ₹16.05 crore during 2019-20 for 27 buildings) based on the estimates submitted by the State Government. Out of the above funds received, the State Government released ₹11.04 crore to the Department during January 2020 and the remaining funds were released to the Department (2022-2023). Audit observed that the Department provided Accessibility facilities to 18 buildings by incurring an expenditure of ₹8.44 crore. The facilities are yet to be provided to the remaining two buildings. As the funds for the period 2019-20 are yet to be received by the Department, works were not taken up for the 27 buildings. ₹2.60 crore received for the works identified in 2018-19 are yet to be utilised by the Department (May 2023).

Audit also observed that the process of identification of public buildings to be provided barrier free environment was yet to be taken up in other parts of the State.

The State Government stated (May 2023) that though the Finance department had released this budget to DEDSC during the year 2022-23, department could not utilise the funds as the sub-agencies had not accepted the released budget due to change in scheduled rates and requested for additional budget. Hence, the released amount of ₹16.05 crore has been deposited to Central Nodal Agency (C.N.A) account as per the instructions of Government of India.

The delay in releasing funds by the State Government and Department's failure to monitor the progress of utilisation of grants affected the implementation of the work for making the building accessible and barrier free for PwDs thereby resulted in depriving divanganjan of accessible infrastructure.

Illustration

Accessibility to voting for PwDs

Following concerted efforts of the State Election Commission of Karnataka to identify and enrol PwDs through door-to-door survey, introduction of Chunavana App for booking wheel chairs, providing sturdy ramps with handrails, preparation of voter slips in braille script, engaging renowned PwDs as State icons etc., the State witnessed an increase in PwD voters turnout from 67 per cent in 2013 Assembly Elections to 76 per cent in 2018 Assembly Elections and 80 per cent in 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The Election Commission of India acknowledged the good practices and new initiatives in Karnataka such as continuous identification and solutions, voter registration and polling, inclusive voter education, leveraging technology for accessible elections etc., and incorporated these in its Strategic Framework.

There were 5.71 lakh PwD voters in Karnataka (Assembly Elections conducted in May 2023) and for the first time, home voting facility was provided for 19,279 PwD voters with benchmark disability in Karnataka and of these, 95 per cent of PwDs cast their vote from home.

3.1.2 Transportation Sector

Section 41 of the RPWD Act mandates the appropriate Government to take suitable measures to provide-

- facilities for persons with disabilities at bus stops, railway stations and airports conforming to the accessibility standards relating to parking spaces, toilets, ticketing counters and ticketing machines and
- access to all modes of transport that conform to the design standards, including retrofitting old modes of transport, wherever technically feasible and safe for persons with disabilities, economically viable and without entailing major structural changes in design.

The State of Karnataka has 8,673 buses (inter district/state) run by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and 6,603 buses run by Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC). In response to audit query regarding the status of accessibility features, the Managing Directors of KSRTC and BMTC stated (October 2020) that the Committee of disabled persons was not formed to consider disabled-friendly suggestions while planning and executing transport-related infrastructure projects. It was also stated the provisions of accessibility features for PwDs as enumerated in the Bus Body Code were taken into consideration while framing bus body specifications besides providing facilities such as foldable and potable ramps with customised wheelchairs in all major and minor bus stands to facilitate easy entry and exit of all passengers with reduced mobility into all types of buses.

In respect of the existing buses, it was stated that retro fitment of lift mechanism facility was not technically feasible in all high floor buses and technical assistance was sought to make these buses accessible to PwDs and assured that facilities like audio alert, buzzers and ring holders would be provided for retro fitment in the coming days. A statement showing the compliance to the provisions by KSRTC and BMTC is detailed in **Appendix 3.1**.

The State Government (May 2023) has not offered any comments.

3.1.3 Absence of Accessibility features in AMRUT projects

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), a GoI Scheme aims to provide basic services like water supply, sewerage, urban transport to households and build amenities in cities which will improve the quality of life for all, especially the poor and the disadvantaged. The components of AMRUT consists among other things, capacity building, urban transport and development of green spaces and parks.

The minimum accessibility features for differently abled persons comprise the following:

Urban Transport	Level boarding/alighting at the stations and space for wheelchair movement, providing easy accessibility at entrance to the bus stations, ramp access with tactile blocks, ramps and low flooring aligned with bus stops displaying a disabled friendly image.
Green space and parks- General Accessibility Features	Wheelchair-accessible entrance gates and pathways, non-slippery and levelled pathways bordered by a handrail, ramps with railings at entrance gates and play areas, display of Signage in Braille (English and Kannada).

Audit observed that the Detailed Project Reports prepared under the scheme did not include accessibility features for PwDs.

The State Government (May 2023) stated that the Department of Urban Development would be requested to issue directions to the Urban Local Bodies to incorporate accessibility features for PwDs in Detailed Project Reports for future projects and tender documents in consultation with special educators and occupation therapists before incorporating the accessibility features.

3.2 Accessible Tourism

Accessible tourism (also known as ‘inclusive tourism’ and ‘barrier-free tourism’) is tourism and travel that is accessible to all people, with disabilities or not, including those with mobility, hearing, sight, cognitive, or intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, older persons and those with temporary disabilities. (Takayama Declaration, UNESCAP 2009).

Audit observed that the State Tourist Policy for 2015-20 and 2020-25 did not focus on the above issues, and it lacked the perspective on major attributes of tourists with disabilities like lack of proper information and inadequate signages at major points, non-availability of personal aids/equipment, locating affordable and accessible accommodation, non-availability of toilets for people with reduced mobility *etc.*, as mentioned in ‘Report on Problems and Prospects of Accessible Tourism in India³’ (October 2010).

The State Government (May 2023) stated that the Department of Tourism would be requested to amend the State Tourism Policy to include accessibility guidelines for Tourists with disabilities.

3.3 Accessibility to Libraries

The provisions of the RPWD Act mandate the appropriate Governments to ensure that all existing public buildings shall be made accessible for PwDs in accordance with the rules formulated by the Central Government within a period not exceeding five years from the date of notification of such rules.

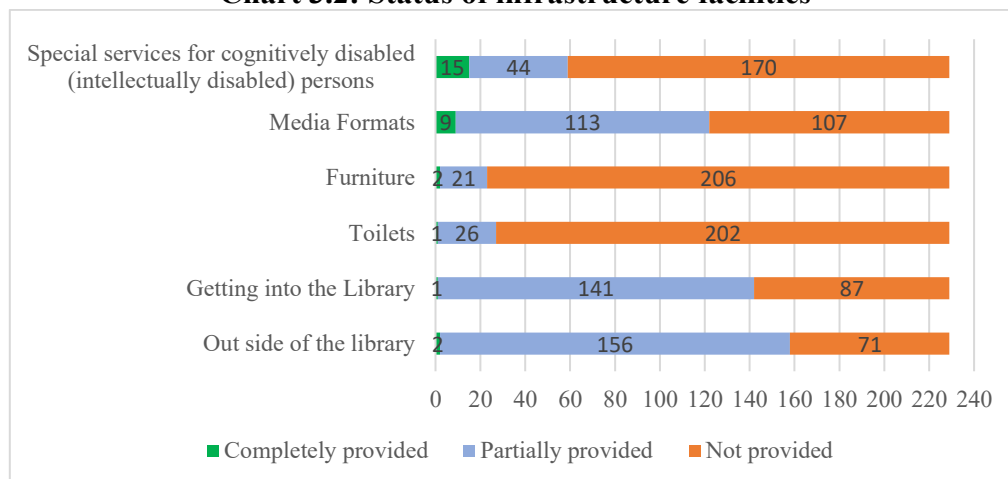
The Central Government brought out (February 2016) the ‘Harmonised Guidelines and Space standards for Barrier Free Environment for Persons with Disabilities’ to facilitate/guide design of spaces to ensure equitable, easy access to persons with disabilities. As per Para 4.2 (vi) of the said guidelines, all open book stacks and all library facilities and equipment should be accessible. A special room should also be provided for people with hearing and vision impairment who need assistance while reading.

There are 6,861 public libraries in the State including 5,766 Gram Panchayat libraries. Audit observed that the Karnataka Library Act, 1965 was not amended to include provisions such as retrofitting the libraries with reasonable structural modifications *etc.*, to make libraries accessible to PwDs. The Department of Libraries did not prepare a plan of action to assess the existing levels of accessibility of library buildings for further enhancements.

Information furnished by 229 libraries (48 – District Central library; 23 – City Central library and 158– Other libraries) on the status of infrastructure facilities available indicated that more than 88 *per cent* of the libraries did not have accessible toilets and furniture for PwDs; 38 *per cent* of the libraries did not provide for ease of access into the library; 47 *per cent* did not have media formats exclusive for PwDs such as audio and visual assisting materials/software and 74 *per cent* did not have services for intellectually disabled persons as shown in **Chart 3.2**.

³ Study carried out by the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management.

Chart 3.2: Status of infrastructure facilities



The State Government stated that the Director, Department of Library is requested by the State Commissioner to create a plan of action for assessing accessibility levels and establishing a separate library wing for the visually challenged persons.

Recommendation 4: The State Government should accord top priority and step up its efforts to ensure that all public buildings, public transport and public places are provided with barrier free access to PwDs.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION

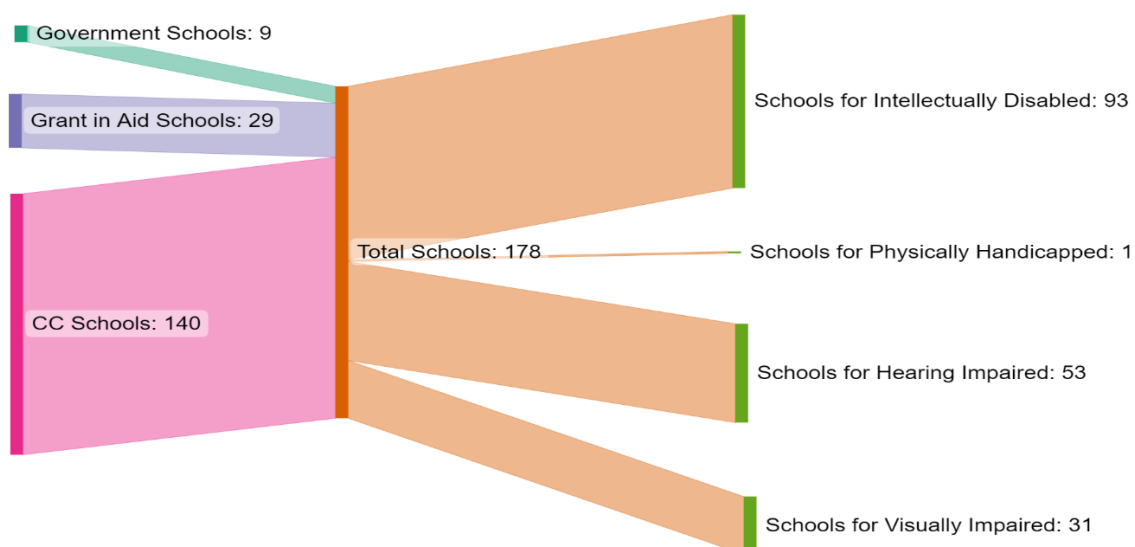
Chapter-IV: Education

Only 59 per cent of the teachers working in the test checked special schools were registered with the Regional Council of India (RCI) while only 40 per cent teachers working had the required qualifications. Special Teachers' Training Centres for Mentally Retarded are yet to be established in the State while the Centenary building constructed in Mysuru is left unused and absence of comprehensive data contributed to the non-achievement of desired objective of providing quality education to the disabled children in the State.

Section 17 (b) to (k) of the RPWD Act mandates the appropriate Government and Local Authorities to take specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education. This required establishing adequate number of teachers training institutions, establishing adequate number of resource centres to support educational institutions at all levels of school education, promote use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, to make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities, to promote research to improve learning *etc.*

"Special education" students are those with a wide range of disabilities, including mental retardation, hearing, visual, and speech impairment, serious emotional disturbances, orthopaedic impairments and learning disabilities. There is no "one size fits all" approach to special education. It is tailored to meet each student's needs. There are 178 special schools functioning under the control of the Department. These schools are classified administratively as Government, Grants-In-Aid and Child Centric Schools, and functionally for various types of disabilities as detailed in **Chart 4.1**.

Chart 4.1: Details of Special Schools functioning under the Department



Source: Information furnished by the Department

Audit observed that as against an amount of ₹492.88 crore released during the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, ₹457.94 crore was spent towards education including grants to Government schools, NGOs running Child Centric (CC) schools, Grant In Aid (GIA) schools and scholarships to students. Important observations regarding deficiencies noticed (90 test checked schools) in the functioning of different types of special schools such as Schools for Intellectual Disabilities, Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

4.1 Schools for Intellectually Disabled

Intellectual Disability (earlier known as Mental Retardation), a condition of significant limitation both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behaviour which covers a range of every day, social and practical skills, is characterised by below-average intelligence or mental ability and a lack of skills necessary for day-to-day living.

In Karnataka, there are 93 schools that are specifically designed to cater to the needs of intellectually disabled students. These schools provide education, therapy, and vocational training for children and young adults with a variety of disabilities besides offering a range of specialised services, including occupational therapy, speech therapy, and physiotherapy to help students overcome their physical and intellectual challenges.

In test checked 46 schools, audit observed issues such as non-following uniform syllabus for intellectually disabled students in schools, shortage of therapists in GIA schools.

4.1.1 Non-adoption of Functional Assessment Checklist for Programming of students with profound mental retardation

Intellectual disability varies from mild to profound (based on Intelligent Quotient levels). The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID), Secunderabad formerly known as National Institute for Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) had developed the Functional Assessment Checklist for Programming (FACP) of students with profound mental retardation for different groups. These groups were categorised as Pre-primary, primary, secondary, pre-vocational and vocational based on ability and chronological age. Adopting this syllabus required the teachers to (i) enter information at the entry level and periodically every quarter; (ii) prepare a teaching plan activity for each child for every term and (iii) send progress reports to parent periodically. The State Government in the year 2010 issued orders to adopt and follow RCI/FACP syllabus in all CC Schools.

A test-check of 46 (10 GIA and 36 CC Schools) out of the 90 Intellectual disability schools revealed the following findings:

- Though State Government stipulated the CC schools to follow the RCI/FACP syllabus, it had not issued similar instructions to the GIA schools. Hence there was no uniformity in the syllabus being followed by the GIA and CC Schools. However, five GIA schools adopted the

FACP syllabus and 24 out of 36 CC schools test-checked were following the FACP syllabus.

- In schools where the FACP syllabus was being followed, student's assessment was not being done and recorded. The level of disability in respect of intellectual disabled students was not being recorded at the time of admission. This hinders the teaching staff from assessing the improvements of the children. Audit noticed that though records were maintained, entries were made in pencil instead of in ink which provides scope for alterations. Further, it was seen that signature of the parents was not obtained in the progress reports.

The State Government stated that the CC school guidelines vary from GIA school guideline. The CC schools for ID children should follow the RCI or NIMH approved syllabus and whereas no restriction in particular syllabus for ID schools under GIA code. It was further stated that the schools which were following the FACP syllabus were directed to conduct the assessment of the special students.

However, Department had ignored the fact that whether it is CC schools or GIA schools, syllabus is uniform and since GIA schools were formed in 1982 when FACP syllabus was not framed, GIA schools followed different syllabus. However, it is the responsibility of the Department to review periodically and follow uniform syllabus for ID students studying in all schools. GoI suggested adoption of FACP syllabus for ID students in 2003.

4.1.2 Vacant Occupational therapists and Physiotherapists posts

The GIA code norms stipulate appointment of one Occupational Therapist and one Physiotherapist in each of the Intellectual Disability School to assess, manage and help children to develop functional skills for everyday life in areas of self-care, schoolwork and play *etc.* Audit observed that except in one school out of the ten test checked GIA schools, these posts were vacant in all the remaining schools. This resulted in the students being deprived of specialist teachers' services.

In CC schools where physiotherapist was available, physiotherapy equipment such as trampoline, balance ball, CP chair, cycle/walker, physiotherapy tables and finger ladders *etc.*, were not being used. The Department had failed to ensure the facilities are provided in these schools before releasing grants periodically.

The State Government stated that the DDWOs of the districts concerned were directed (April 2023) to submit the report about the non-availability of Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist in Intellectual Disability Schools.

4.1.3 Absence of lady teachers

Scrutiny of the records of Mahaprajapati Day Special School for Intellectual Disabled Children, Bidar showed that one third of the students were girls and aged about 18 years. However, there were no lady teachers to deal with these girl students. In response, the Institute stated that *ayahs* were appointed, and efforts would be made to appoint lady teachers. Thus, absence of lady teachers

in Intellectually Disabled schools where girl students are in sufficient number would be a grave inconvenience for the girl students.

The State Government stated that the Board of Management of the said school would be instructed to hire women special teachers and report accordingly.

Recommendation 5: The State Government must ensure that all Intellectual Disability schools follow uniform syllabus (FACP), fill up the posts of occupational/physiotherapist on priority basis and provide accessible infrastructure in all schools.

4.2 Schools for Visually Impaired

RPWD Act defines visual impairment as a condition where a person has either total absence of sight or a low vision. The education for visually impaired is aimed to develop physical, mental and social potentials of these children and in turn develop life adjustment and self-care skills to help them become well-adjusted and independent individuals in society. While visually impaired children at the primary level require the direct assistance of a specialist teacher, the children at higher levels depend more on regular classroom teachers provided they are given the necessary materials for learning in the regular classroom.

Apart from academic subjects, blind child is required to be well trained in compensatory skills such as braille reading methods, use of slate and audio equipment, development of visual perceptual activities, orientation and mobility *etc.*

For visually impaired students, there are 31 schools which provide them with food, accommodation and medical facilities. The students are given computer training, English communication, leadership qualities, motivation and confidence building courses besides imparting training in mobility techniques such as crossing roads, boarding buses and walking in busy streets.

In test-checked 20 schools, Audit observed various shortcomings as discussed below.

4.2.1 Orientation and Mobility Training Centre, Bengaluru

Orientation and Mobility Program (OMP) refers to training involving special instructions that enables blind and visually impaired individuals to learn safe techniques for crossing streets and accessing public transportation using canes. The State Government accorded permission (January 1984) to appoint ten Orientation and Mobility Officers for imparting training at the Orientation and Mobility Training Centre at the National Association for the Blind (NAB), Karnataka Branch, Bengaluru to GIA. Each Officer can train four blind persons in one batch for six weeks and 28 blind persons can be trained in a year in seven batches by one officer.

As per the data furnished to audit, the Centre had conducted 37 courses during the period from 2016-17 to 2021-22 and trained 556 persons. Audit noticed that as many as 50, 28 and 22 persons were trained in each batch during 2019-20 which works out to 17, 9 and 7 persons per teacher.

From 2019-20 the Centre had only two permanent staff (one retired in July 2022 and another due in February 2025) and one temporary teaching staff for conducting its courses.

The reduction in duration of the course and increase in number of persons per teacher reflects on the effectiveness of the training imparted to blind persons. The activities of the Institute are likely to stop unless steps are initiated to fill the vacant posts.

The State Government stated that DDWO concerned was instructed (February 2023) to take necessary action to appoint Orientation and Mobility Instructor as per 1982 GIA code.

4.2.2 Vacant posts of Mobility Instructor

Students in preschool and elementary school need to be instructed on how to travel around their school building, playground, and neighbourhood by themselves, and about more complex environmental concepts, including topography (slope, hilly) and textures (concrete, bumpy), and about positional concepts (in front of, in back of).

Though all the four Government and six out of the seven GIA schools test-checked had a sanctioned post of Mobility Instructor to teach the blind children, these posts were vacant.

The State Government stated since the qualified candidates were not available in the State, these posts are yet to be filled. However, the Department had requested (February 2020) the RCI, New Delhi to organise the refresher and training programmes for in service teachers of special schools in Karnataka. Audit, however, observed that further follow up action was not taken up with RCI New Delhi regarding refresher and training programmes.

4.2.3 Music exam for visually impaired students

Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board is responsible for conducting examinations like Music, Karnataka Open School, Diploma in Education, etc. The State Government sanctioned a post for music teacher in all schools including the GIA and CC schools. As per the information furnished, music teachers were appointed and working in 16 test-checked schools. In the remaining three ⁴ schools (two GIA and one CC), the post was vacant.

Though the schools adopted the music syllabus as prescribed by the Board, it was observed that no student in 13 of the test-checked schools had taken the music examination conducted by the Board during the period from 2017-18 to

⁴ M. Krishna School for Blind, Hassan, Karnataka Welfare Association for the Blind Bengaluru, Asha Kirana School for Blind, Chikkamagaluru.

2021-22. In the other six schools, only one to 18 *per cent* of the total students had taken up the music exam during the above period which was not in continuous pattern. (**Appendix 4.1**).

The Department thus failed to take corrective action to encourage blind students to appear for the music examination. This deprived the students from obtaining certificates that can help them in securing jobs.

The State Government stated that instructions were issued (February 2023) to all DDWOs to coordinate with the NGOs who are running special schools for Visually Impaired children to encourage the students to appear for music examination conducted by the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board.

4.2.4 Unfruitful expenditure on construction of Centenary Bhavan

The State Government, to commemorate completion of 100 years of the Government Blind School, Mysuru established in 1901, accorded (March 2003) sanction for construction of a Centenary Bhavan within the premises of the Deaf and Dumb School. The work was entrusted (August 2005) to Karnataka Land Army Corporation (now known as Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Limited) and the work was completed at a total cost of ₹50 lakh and handed over (January 2012) to the Department.

The building was not inaugurated and kept idle for the last nine years. Audit observed that the windows and windowpanes were broken and many wheelchairs, motorised vehicles, artificial limbs and crutches *etc.*, were dumped in the building. Though the Institute submitted (February 2020) proposals to the Director seeking grants for undertaking repairs estimating to cost ₹19.50 lakh, the Director did not consider (March 2020) the proposal as the District Disabled Welfare Officer, Mysuru stated that no grants were required for repair. There were, however, no recorded reasons justifying the action of the DDWO. Consequently, the building continues to be in a bad shape and non-utilisation of the building resulted in infructuous expenditure of ₹50 lakhs.

The State Government stated (May 2023) that at present DDWO, Mysuru was using the building.

Exhibit 4.1: Centenary Building within the premises of deaf and dumb school, Mysuru



Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

4.2.5 Institution specific findings

(i) Teekshna Blind School, Chitradurga

Test check of records of Teekshna Blind School, Chitradurga (granted GIA status in April 2011) revealed that the students' strength which was 70 during 2011-12 reduced to 23 during 2014-15 and to four during 2021-22. Though Departmental authorities including Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Zilla Panchayat (ZP), Chitradurga (April 2018-April 2019) noticed that number of teachers were more than the number of students and recommended relocation/transfer of the teachers to other GIA institutions on top priority, no action was initiated. Records indicated that the management of the school had sought (January 2020) for cancellation of release of grants to this school and requested for transfer of teachers to some other school on the ground that there were no sufficient students in the school. The proposal of the Department (May 2021) to transfer the teachers to Asha Kirana Residential Blind School, Chikkamagaluru is yet to be approved by the Government. It was seen that the Department had released ₹1.05 crore as grants to the institution during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22. Thus, following decreasing trend in students' admission, action should have been taken for the transfer of the students as requested for.

The State Government stated that request for seeking approval for transfer of the teachers to other GIA institutions is under process.

(ii) M. Krishna Residential School for the Blind, Hassan

Review of records of M. Krishna Residential School for the Blind, Hassan revealed that there was a gradual reduction in the strength of students from 45 in 2011-12 to eight in 2022-23. The institution had requested (July 2018) for transfer of students to other institutions as teachers were not working

satisfactorily. The Department did not initiate action even after the request of the institution was forwarded by the State Commissioner (November 2021) to take suitable action in the interest of the students. It was noticed that ₹1.52 crore was released towards salaries of the staff during the last five years.

The State Government stated (May 2023) that District Disabled Welfare Officer, Hassan was instructed (February 2023) to submit a detailed report and after receiving the report, action would be taken against the organisation as per rules.

4.3 Schools for Hearing Impaired

Hearing impairment is a partial or total inability to hear. It consists of two categories - deaf and hard of hearing. “Deaf” means persons having 70 dB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears and “Hard of hearing” means person having 60 dB to 70 dB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears.

In test checked 23 schools audit observed shortcomings in functioning of these schools for visually impaired students are detailed in subsequent paragraphs.

4.3.1 Non-availability of Group Hearing Aids

A student with a hearing impairment may experience difficulty in the subjects of grammar, spelling and vocabulary, taking notes while listening to lectures, participating in classroom discussions, watching educational videos and presenting oral reports. Group Hearing aids enable hearing impaired students to study together with normal students. It consists of one Teacher’s Mic Amplifier Unit and 8 to 12 students’ Headphone Mic Amplifier units.

Audit observed that except seven⁵ schools, none of the other test-checked schools including Government schools were using the group hearing aids for teaching purposes. This will result in communication barriers, limited access to information and social exclusion. The State Government did not offer any comments.

⁵ Sheila Kotwala School for hearing Impaired Bengaluru, Sunaada Deaf and Dumb School, Bengaluru, Shatashrunga Residential School for Hearing Impaired Children Bengaluru, PV Datti Rotary School for Deaf and Dumb, Hubballi, Sri Renuka Yellamma Residential School Ranebennur Haveri district, Sairanga Deaf and Dumb School, Mysuru, Putteeramma Deaf and Dumb School, Mysuru.

Exhibit 4.2 : Group Hearing Aids in Hearing Impaired Schools

Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

4.3.2 Non-implementation of Project - Learning Enhancement for Differently Abled Students of Primary Schools

The State Government under the State Collaboration Initiative Programme of GoI proposed for implementation of the Project 'Learning Enhancement for Differently Abled Students of Primary Schools' at an estimated cost of ₹2.36 crore. The project aimed to provide hearing impaired students with digital education, ensure learning Math, Science and English concepts at appropriate grade level that would enhance their regular classroom teaching besides enabling access to new technologies and multimedia in special schools using multimedia room, tablets, satellite and internet connectivity. More than 1000 primary class students with hearing impairment across 46 special schools in the State were to obtain benefits out of this project. GoI released (March 2016) an amount of ₹80 lakh out of its share of one crore rupees.

Records indicated that citing the reason that a similar project implemented on pilot basis in Education Department did not achieve the fruitful result, the Department decided (May 2020) to drop the project and refunded (December 2020) ₹89.77 lakh along with interest to GoI. It was noticed that the Department had not conducted an independent pilot study to arrive at its decision thereby losing out an opportunity to avail the funding from the GoI to the benefit for the PwDs education. The State Government did not offer its comments.

4.3.3 Institution specific findings

(i) Government School for deaf and dumb, Bengaluru (Hamsadhwani)

Test check of records of School of Hearing and Speech Impaired run by M/s NASEOH Institution Bengaluru (Hamsadhwani) (granted GIA status in 1988) revealed that the students' strength had reduced from 72 in 2015-16 to 12 in 2021-22. Following Department's recommendation to protect the interest of 72 students studying in the school and to protect the land (2 acres and 13 guntas) located in the prime area of the city, the State Government accorded (July 2016) permission to convert the school into a residential school and sanctioned ₹64.35 lakh to construct the hostel. Though the hostel building was constructed and handed over (February 2019) to the Department, the hostel

was not put to use and the school was yet to be converted into residential school.

Exhibit 4.3: Hostel building of Government School for Deaf and Dumb, Bengaluru (Hamsadhwani)



Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

Further, it was also noticed that the high school classes were being conducted without teachers for Maths and Science subjects since 2015-16. Audit also observed that the teachers let out a portion of the school ground to a nearby private school (Presten Public School) for a monthly rent of ₹5,000 without any agreement and without the concurrence of the Department. The State Government did not offer its comments.

(ii) Government Residential School for Deaf, Mysuru

During the period 2011-12 to 2018-19, it was reported that 41 students/inmates studying in Government Residential School of Deaf ran away from the school and only six students were traced later. Audit observed that neither the institution nor the Department had taken any measures to trace the whereabouts of the other 35 students (March 2023) which not only exposed security concerns but also indicated lack of sensitivity towards CWSNs. The State Government did not offer its comments.

(iii) Guild of Service, Speech and Hearing Centre, Mangaluru.

The Guild of Service, Speech and Hearing Centre established (1974) in Mangaluru provides training and services to children and adults (age group ranging from 20 months to 80 years) with defects in speech and hearing. The State Government accorded (1982) GIA status and sanctioned two posts of Speech Therapists and one Senior Division Assistant (SDA). Consequent on retirement of both the Speech Therapists (2003 and 2011), no further recruitments were made. At present, the institute is functioning with one Speech Therapist and one Ear Mould Technician on honorarium basis in addition to the regular SDA posted.

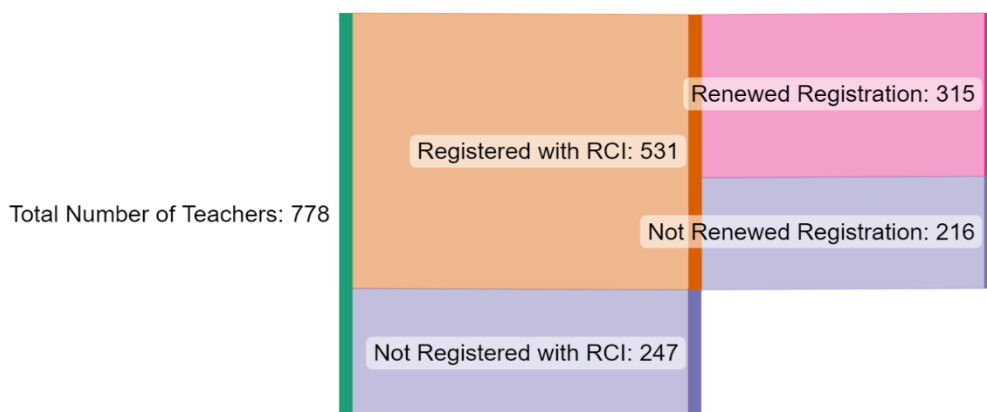
Audit noticed that institution is working with the services availed through the Speech Therapist who retired in 2011. Even though requests were made to reimburse the honorarium, the Department is yet to release grants even when the number of speech therapy sessions increased from 1,380 in 2015-16 to 2,036 in 2021-22. Thus, non-filling up of permanent technical staff might lead to closure of the institution. The State Government did not offer its comments.

4.4 Registration of teachers with Rehabilitation Council of India

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) set up as a registered society in 1986, became (June 1993) a statutory body through the enactment of the RCI Act (September 1992). The mandate given to RCI is to regulate and monitor services given to persons with disability, to standardise syllabi and to maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education. It has the additional responsibility to ensure that professionals in these fields update and upgrade their knowledge and skills on a continuing basis. The persons registered with RCI shall be entitled to practice as a rehabilitation professional /personnel in any part of India. The registration is to be renewed once in every five years.

There are a total of 778 teachers working in the 90 test checked schools of which 531 teachers (68 *per cent*) had registered with RCI. Further, out of the 531 registered teachers, 315 teachers (59 *per cent*) had renewed their registrations. Thus, only 315 (40 *per cent*) out of 778 teachers in the test checked schools were qualified enough to deliver services to PwDs as shown in **Chart 4.2**.

Chart 4.2: Registration and Renewal of teachers with RCI



Though Department was aware that teachers not registered with RCI were working in all categories of schools, adequate steps were not taken to ensure that all teachers update and upgrade their knowledge and skills in a time bound manner. Audit observed that the Department did not insist on this aspect while releasing the grants to Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and Child Centric (CC) schools. In respect of six schools⁶, it was noticed that all the teachers were not registered with RCI but had received grant of ₹1.99 crore during

⁶ Ajay Deaf and Dumb School Belagavi, Asha Kirana School for Blind Bidar, Avakasha MR School Hassan, Jyanayogi Pandit Panchakshari Gavai Galavara School for HI, Siggavi Haveri district, Sri Jnana Kirana Residential school for MR children, Chikkakuravathi, Ranebennur, Haveri District and Vidyachetana School for MR Children Byadagi Haveri District.

2021-22 only. It was also seen that 18 teachers in GIA schools, seven teachers in Government schools and 34 teachers in CC schools had not acquired the special D.Ed /B.Ed qualifications.

Thus, 60 *per cent* of the teachers were delivering services to the students with disabilities in violation of the statutory provisions of the RCI Act, and the Department failed to monitor this aspect. This led to students being deprived of quality teaching.

The State Government stated that the Grant-in-Aid (GIA) were being sanctioned to schools in the interest of the special children. It was also stated that GIA were not released to teachers of CC schools who had not acquired special D.Ed/B.Ed qualifications. However, the reply was not specific about RCI registration and its renewal.

Illustration

Dr. Steiner's Curative Educational Institute for Mentally Retarded, Dharwad:

This School for Intellectually disabled had 51 students during 2022-23 and did not have any qualified teacher. After retirement of regular teaching staff/death of the staff (October 2003 to May 2011), the management had not taken any steps to appoint qualified teaching staff. Instead, the physical education teacher and music teacher were handling the classes though they did not possess any requisite qualifications for teaching including RCI registration.

Government school for Deaf students (Mysuru): Three teachers were teaching since 2000 without any requisite qualifications for teaching including RCI registration.

4.5 Accessible Infrastructure in Schools

The RPWD Act mandates that appropriate Government and Local Authorities shall ensure that every child with benchmark disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment and there is a direct relationship between school infrastructure and educational performance.

4.5.1 Accessible infrastructure in regular schools

Analysis of the information provided by the Project Directors of Sarva Sikshana Abhiyan regarding the status of accessibility in 71,830 schools of the State showed the absence of disabled friendly toilets in 52,321 schools (73 *per cent*). While ramps were provided in 51,464 schools (72 *per cent*), railings were fixed in 42,987 schools (60 *per cent*). District-wise analysis showed that in Dakshina Kannada, majority of schools were provided with ramps and railings and disabled friendly toilets and most of the schools in Kodagu, Mandya and Uttara Kannada had ramps and railings. The performance of Bengaluru Urban (ramps/railings), Kolar (ramps/railings) and Belagavi, Hassan and Kalaburagi (toilets) was poor as majority of the schools were not

disabled friendly. The district wise availability of accessible infrastructure is indicated in **Appendix 4.2**.

4.5.2 Accessible infrastructure in special schools

Audit noticed that no action plan was drawn up at the Apex level to conduct Access Audit of the special schools to identify the deficiencies and take corrective measures thereon to ensure that these schools are accessible.

Analysis of the information obtained from special schools regarding the status of accessibility in 90 out of 178 special schools in the State showed absence of disabled friendly toilets in 69 schools (77 per cent). While ramps were provided in 46 schools (51 per cent), railings were fixed in 42 schools (47 per cent) (**Exhibit 4.4**).

Exhibit 4.4: Ramp with handrails and disabled friendly toilets

		
<p>Ramp with Handrails- Vishwas Intellectual Disability School Bidar</p>	<p>Ramps with Handrails-Asha Kiran School for Visually Impaired children, Chikkamagaluru</p>	<p>Disabled Friendly Toilet Shraddhanjali integrated school, Bengaluru</p>

Source: Photograph taken during Joint Physical Verification

Joint Physical Verification of special schools in the selected districts showed deficiencies in amenities provided and many of the schools were in deplorable conditions as detailed in **Appendix 4.3**. A few examples with photographs are given below.

Illustration

SJM Residential School for Physically Handicapped, Haveri

The school did not have ramp facilities and railings in the entire campus. There were steep steps at the entrance of the classrooms. There were no separate toilets for boys and girls and only two toilets were available which were also far from the classrooms. The classroom building was in dilapidated condition and did not have fans and proper furniture. There were no separate rooms for both boys and girls for residential purposes (hostels). The rooms meant for office use of the Ashrama located in the premises were being utilised as hostel rooms. Facilities such as cots, pillows, mattresses and mosquito nets were not provided.

Exhibit 4.5: Deficiencies of amenities in the schools



Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

Illustration

Mahaprajapati MR Special Residential School, Bidar

Number of inmates 56 boys and 30 girls

School was functioning in a residential house with attached accommodation for classes (shed made of metal sheets). Classrooms were made by partitioning the shed with metal sheet walls. As there were wide gaps between the roof and walls, there was no protection during heavy rain. Teaching activities cannot be conducted during heavy rain seasons and in summer seasons. Condition of toilets was very poor and even doors of the toilets were not properly covered.



Residential School Building



Classroom



Toilets

Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

In exit conference it was stated that necessary steps would be taken to address issues raised by audit. One instance of action taken subsequent to audit is shown below:

Illustration

During joint physical verification of CC School (Jyothi Residential School for Mentally Retarded, Haveri) in December 2020, audit party noticed improper infrastructural facilities. (The school was located in an industrial area. It consists of one big hall converted into classrooms and one hostel room each for boys and girls. This hostel also acts a storeroom/godown for the factories in the industrial area for keeping their materials) Management of the school had taken action to improve infrastructural facilities and present school building is completely renovated (June 2023).

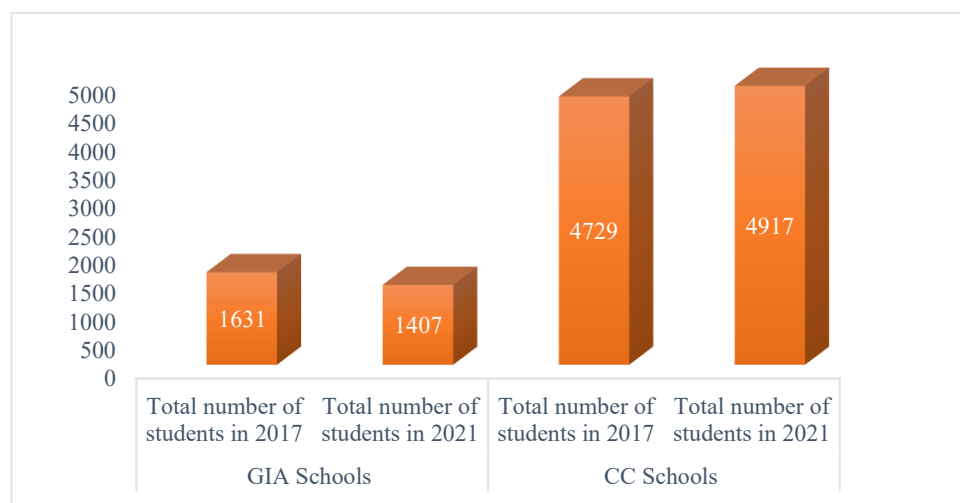
Jyothi Residential School for Mentally Retarded, Haveri (December 2020)

Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

4.6 Poor functioning of GIA schools vis-a-vis CC schools

Apart from Government schools, Government releases grants also to GIA Schools and CC Schools. Main difference between GIA Schools and CC Schools is that under GIA schools, staff get Government pay scales irrespective of strength of students whereas Department releases grants to CC schools as per the strength ₹6,200/6,800 per student in case of residential and ₹5,200/6,000 per student in case of non-residential and teachers only get honorarium ranging from ₹13,500-₹21,000 per month. (Honorarium revised from September 2022).

Audit noticed decreasing trend in admission of students in GIA schools compared to students' admission in CC schools as detailed in **Chart 4.3** and shortage of teaching faculty and absence of infra facilities in GIA schools could be the main reason for decreasing trend in admission of students in GIA when compared to CC schools, where grants are being given on the basis of admission of students.

Chart 4.3: GIA schools and CC schools

The State Government stated that GIA norms were different from CC school norms, but the reply did not offer any comments about decrease in the strength of students.

4.7 Absence of Higher Secondary Education Schools for Visually and Hearing Impaired

The existing special schools in the State offer education up to tenth standard for the visually and hearing impaired. This requires the students to subsequently study in normal schools (where there are no special teachers to cater to the needs of these students) or have to discontinue and look for vocational courses of one/two-year duration. Audit observed that the Department had not initiated action to commence Higher Secondary Schools till 12th standard. Hence the students studying in the State are deprived of Higher Education after completion of schooling. The State Government did not offer its comments.

4.8 Reservation in Higher Educational Institutions

As per Section 32 of RPWD Act, all Government institutions of higher education and other higher education institutions receiving aid from the Government are to reserve not less than five *per cent* seats for persons with benchmark disabilities and the persons with benchmark disabilities are to be given an upper age relaxation of five years for admission in institutions of higher education.

Audit observed that the Department did not maintain data on the total number of seats available in Government and Aided colleges and those earmarked, if any, were in accordance with the provisions of the Act. As a result, there was no mechanism to monitor the compliance of the Act by these colleges. The State Government did not offer its comments.

4.9 Absence of Education Indicators

The Education Department introduced Student Achievement Tracking System (SATS) to track every child through the State, from birth registration till he or she attains vocational or professional qualification. The policy goal of “Every Child in School and Learning Well” requires tracking enrolment of all children of school going age in Government, aided and unaided schools.

Audit observed that the Department had neither adopted the SATS nor had brought any such similar mechanism to have a comprehensive database of the students studying in special schools. Consequently, there was no data on the various education indicators⁷ in respect of special schools which come under the purview of the Department resulting in non-tracking of social cost benefit on the budget expenditure (asset management) of the Government on Human Development Index. Absence of these indicators resulted in a loss of opportunity to analyse specific reasons for school dropouts, if any, to design appropriate intervention strategy and reduce dropout rate. The State Government did not offer its comments.

Recommendation 6: The State Government needs to ensure availability of hearing aids, audio books and equipment in all institutions for overall improvement of PwDs.

⁷ Gross Enrolment Ratio, Net Enrolment Ratio, Retention, Transition Rate, Average Annual Drop Out, Promotion Rate, Gender Parity Index, Pupil Teacher Ratio for sanctioned posts and Pupil Teacher Ratio for working posts.

CHAPTER V

SKILL DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Chapter-V: Skill Development, Employment and Social Security

The Government is yet to establish required technical training institutions for imparting skills to enable them secure livelihood. Community Care Centres were not established for the orphaned children and destitute disabled persons and many Central Sector Schemes designed for the welfare of the disabled were not implemented. The awareness and publicity about the provisions of the revised Act and Rules was inadequate, which resulted in their non-implementation. As a result, many of the PwDs had to seek legal intervention for their rights. There were deficiencies in few of the test-checked schemes implemented.

Social protection plays a key role in realizing the rights of persons with disabilities of all ages, providing them with an adequate standard of living, a basic level of income security, thus, reducing levels of poverty and vulnerability. People with disabilities need skills to engage in livelihood activities. These skills can be classified into foundation skills acquired through education, professional skills to enable undertake a particular activity or task and business skills to succeed in self-employment.

5.1 Skill development for PwDs

Government is extending grants to institutions such as Non-residential Industrial Training Institute of the National Association for Blind, Mysuru, Technical Training Institute run by the National Association for Blind, Bengaluru, Association of People with Disabilities (APD), Bengaluru to impart vocational training to PwDs and improve their employability skill and these institutions are functioning with 100 *per cent* financial assistance from the State budget (Under 1982 GIA code). Audit observations on functioning of technical institutes are discussed in subsequent paras in this chapter.

5.1.1 *Non-compliance to guidelines by Non-residential Industrial Training Institute of the National Association for Blind, Mysuru*

The State Government accorded (December 1985) sanction to start non-residential Industrial Training Institute (ITI) for the blind run by National Association for Blind (NAB) at Mysuru under the GIA scheme for Physically handicapped persons and Mentally Retarded children. The institution initially established for blind students is also now training hearing impaired students.

Records indicated that the teaching faculty did not possess either Braille skills or sign language required to teach the visually and hearing impaired. The institute stated (January 2021) the teachers were imparting training through experience. It was also seen that the post of the Director is vacant since 1995 and the running of the institute is by a manager.

The condition of the institute is detrimental to the interest of the children.

5.1.2 Working of Technical Training Institute run by the National Association for Blind, Bengaluru

The Technical Training Institute established in 1982 by the National Association for Blind was granted affiliation by State Council of Vocational Training in 1987 for conducting ITI related courses. The Institute had not conducted ITI courses since all the GIA teaching staff had retired by 2015-16. The institution has so far not filled up the vacant posts. As per the information furnished by the institution, it had conducted one course each of six months duration (foundation course) during 2017-18 and 2018-19 through an outsourced staff and the Attender. In 2019-20, five courses of two-month duration (Garment course) were conducted.

Audit observed that necessary permission for conducting these courses was not obtained from the Government. It was noticed that the institution had received grants of ₹25.11 lakh during the period 2016-17 to 2021-22 which was thus largely unfruitful. The State Government did not offer its comments.

5.1.3 Non-establishment of Training Centres

The State Government accorded (September 2001) its approval to establish two Special Training Centres during the year 2002-03 viz., the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Workers' Training Centre with financial assistance from GoI and the Special Teachers' Training Centre for Vocational Training to MR children with assistance from NIEPID, Secunderabad. The role of CBR was to enable PwDs to access work opportunities by actively promoting and facilitating the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Audit observed that the Department had not taken steps to establish these institutions even after 18 years of approval by the State Government. As a result, it failed to create conducive conditions assuring vocational education initiatives to PwDs. The State Government did not offer its comments.

5.2 Employment of PwDs

Government of India have reserved identified posts and Special Employment Exchanges were also established to provide platform for job aspirants to register themselves for appointments. Besides, RPWD Act provides incentives to private sector employers who give opportunities to PwDs. Besides, GoI also extends financial assistance to PwDs for their skill upgradation and provides loans at concessional rates of interest for self-employment opportunities.

Audit observed that as against an amount of ₹2.64 crore released for placement cell of the differently abled programme during the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, ₹0.32 crore was spent which indicates department had accorded least priority to employment programmes for PwDs.

Audit observations in providing jobs to PwDs in Government jobs, working of Special Employment exchanges and compliance to Act provisions are discussed below.

5.2.1 Delay in notification of Reservation and identification of posts

Section 34 of the RPWD Act stipulates that ‘Every appropriate Government shall appoint in every Government establishment, not less than four *per cent*, of the total number of vacancies in the cadre strength in each group of posts meant to be filled with persons with benchmark disabilities. Further, as per Section 33, the appropriate Government shall identify posts in establishments which can be held by respective category of persons with benchmark disabilities in respect of the vacancies reserved in accordance with the provisions of section 34, constitute an expert committee with representation of persons with benchmark disabilities for identification of such posts.

The State Government brought out an exclusive reservation policy of mandatory appointment of not less than four *per cent* of the total number of vacancies (Group A and B) and not less than five *per cent* of the total number of vacancies (Group C and D) in the cadre strength in each group of posts meant to be filled with persons with benchmark disabilities in September 2020 after a lapse of four years of implementation of the RPWD Act. Though an expert committee was constituted (November 2017) to identify the posts in the various Departments that were to be held by persons with benchmark disabilities, the Committee was yet to submit its report (December 2022).

The State Government stated that a committee for identification posts of persons with disabilities had been constituted and every Department in the State had to submit the proposal in prescribed format to this committee to identify the particular post for PwD and issue the notification. Based on the request, Committee will identify and submit the report to concerned authority to fill post as per the roster system.

Non-submission of the report led to non-identification of the posts in various departments, thereby denying the rightful opportunity to the deserving candidates.

5.2.2 Non-implementation of Supreme Court directions

The Hon’ble Supreme Court vide its judgement (in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 521 of 2008) upheld (June 2016) that once the post is identified, it must be reserved for PwD, irrespective of the mode of recruitment adopted by the State for filling up of the said post. In the light of this judgement, the State Commissioner requested (February 2020) to issue revised orders as was done in Andhra Pradesh and Punjab States. The Government is yet to act in this regard. Consequently, reservation in promotions were not being followed in the State. The State Government did not offer its comments.

5.2.3 Special Employment Exchange

As per Section 36 of RPWD Act 2016, the appropriate Government may require the employer in every establishment to furnish such information or return as prescribed in relation to vacancies appointed for persons with benchmark disability that have occurred or are about to occur in establishments to such Special Employment Exchange (SEE) and the establishment is to comply with such requisition.

The State Government decided (February 2004) to close down the SEEs at Belagavi, Hubballi, Kalaburagi, Mangaluru and Mysuru due to insufficient work and fewer number of PwDs getting jobs through SEEs. Only one SEE is presently functioning at Bengaluru. Only 98 of the registered PwDs were employed (32 in Government/Central PSU and 66 in private sector) through SEE during the period 2016-17 to 2021-22 as few organisations barring furnishing the prescribed returns to SEE. As per the information furnished by Assistant Director, SEE, there are a total of 1,026 PwDs registered as of March 2022. In the absence of SEEs other than Bengaluru, there was no platform for the job aspirants to register themselves for appointments.

The Department had not made alternate arrangements for registration of job aspirants like creating awareness about *kaushalkar.com*, the web portal of the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood (SDEL) which provides the youth to acquire necessary skills and expertise to increase their employability besides providing with job opportunities. The State Government did not offer its comments.

5.2.4 Incentives to private sector employers for providing employment to PwDs

As per Section 35 of RPWD Act, incentives are to be provided to private sector employers to ensure that at least five *per cent* of their work force is composed of persons with benchmark disability. Accordingly, the GoI introduced (February 2017) 'Incentive Scheme for providing employment to PwDs in the private sector' effective from 1 April 2016, which provides for payment of employer's contribution to Provident Fund and Insurance by Government, payment of gratuity *etc.*

Audit observed that the Department had neither maintained any data on employment of PwDs in private sector nor had conducted any survey to assess the extent of employment among PwDs. It also failed to give wide publicity about the scheme by arranging workshops or seminars in association with FICCI / Chamber of Commerce / ASSOCHAM to sensitise multinational and domestic private employers about the provisions of the RPWD Act and the incentives to be provided to them.

The State Government stated that office of the State Commissioner has requested (February 2023) Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Chamber of Commerce and ASSOCHAM, Bengaluru to facilitate a workshop with corporate sectors to create awareness about the provisions of Section 35 of the RPWD Act 2016 and further stated that the private sectors would be requested to provide at least five *per cent* employment opportunities to PwDs in their firms and incentives will also be provided to the private sectors who will provide employment opportunity for PwDs.

5.2.5 Non-execution of Agreement with National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation

The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) established (January 1997) by GoI finances, facilitates and mobilises funds for the empowerment of PwDs including their skill upgradation and provides

loans to target groups through its State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) nominated by State Government, Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks and other Institutions. A total of 3,117 beneficiaries in the State had received loans amounting to ₹10.15 crore during the period 2002-03 to 2013-14.

The State Government transferred (October 2014) the responsibility of implementing NHFDC schemes from Karnataka State Women Development Corporation to DEDASC. Consequently, the Department was required to execute General Loan Agreement with NHFDC and provide State Government Guarantee. Audit observed that the Department did not execute the agreement for which no reasons were placed on record. No action was taken by the State Government even when NHFDC in January 2020 had appraised that it was not able to actively engage in the State.

Consequently, the PwD population in the State were not able to benefit from NHFDC's concessional credit linkages in the absence of an active SCA for its schemes like *Jan Aushadi Kendras*, *NHFDC Swavalamban Kendra*, *Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana* etc. The objectives of the schemes are indicated in **Appendix 5.1**.

The State Government stated that Karnataka State Women Development Corporation and other nationalised banks had not accepted /shown interest to become a SCA, for implementation of the scheme. Therefore, all NHFDC schemes had not been implemented since 2014-15. The State Government should have explored other avenues especially in the light of NHFDC's appraisal, the scheme would be a means of aiding PwD in empowerment.

5.3 Social Security for PwDs

5.3.1 Establishment of Community Centres

As per Section 24 of the RPWD Act, the appropriate Government shall within the limit of its economic capacity and development formulate necessary schemes and programmes to safeguard and promote the right of PwDs for adequate standard of living to enable them to live independently or in the community, provided that the quantum of assistance to the persons with disabilities under such schemes and programmes shall be at least 25 *per cent* higher than the similar schemes applicable to others.

The schemes devised shall provide for Community centres with good living conditions in terms of safety, sanitation, health care and counselling, facilities for persons including children with disabilities who have no family or have been abandoned, or are without shelter or livelihood, support during natural or man-made disasters and in areas of conflicts *etc.*

Audit observed that apart from Intellectual Disability schools and Manasa Kendras in Bengaluru and Belagavi, the Department had not initiated steps to identify institutions or devised schemes to encourage establishing such community centres.

The State Government stated that Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka has announced setting up of Shelter workshop for mentally retarded persons to provide required rehabilitation and training facilities under one roof and once

the schemes are approved at the Government level, the project would be implemented in the State.

5.3.2 Non-implementation and deficiencies in implementation of schemes

The main objective of the Department was to bring the PwDs into mainstream of the society with focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities. This required a multi dimension approach for overall welfare and development of the PwDs. Accordingly, Government is implementing schemes such as Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme, Adhara Scheme *etc.*, for the benefit of PwDs. Audit observed deficiencies in implementation which resulted in not extending the benefits of these schemes to the PwDs as discussed below:

5.3.2.1 Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme

The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities had brought out the Health Insurance scheme with the objective of providing affordable Health Insurance to PwDs under the National Trust Act. Under the scheme, all enrolled beneficiaries would be provided with a health insurance cover of up to one lakh rupees on reimbursement basis for OPD treatment including medicines, pathology, diagnostic tests *etc.*, non-surgical hospitalisation, corrective surgeries for existing disabilities. Every year the policy is to be renewed online either by the beneficiary or NGO by paying the prescribed fee.

The State Government implemented the scheme from August 2014 and pays ₹250 per beneficiary for the first time and beneficiary needs to renew it thereafter to avail the scheme benefits. As per the information furnished by eleven test-checked districts, an expenditure of ₹5.95 lakh was incurred during the period 2016-17 to 2021-22 towards enrolment of 2,379 persons.

Audit observed that only 201 beneficiaries in Bagalakote district had renewed their policies (one time only) and the Department had not taken any measures to ensure that beneficiaries renewed their policies so that the benefit of insurance could be availed by them. As the renewal fee is only of ₹50 per year per beneficiary, Department needs to revisit scheme guidelines to pay renewal fee also to ensure health insurance scheme benefits are availed by all PwDs.

The State Government stated that the Department had appointed District Disabled Welfare Officer of Belagavi as the nodal officer for adequate implementation of the scheme. The concerned District Disabled Welfare Officers and Nodal Agency were instructed to renew the policy for all the beneficiaries registered under the scheme.

5.3.2.2 Insurance scheme for Parents/Guardians of Mentally Retarded Children

Under this scheme, the Directorate of Disabled Welfare contributes the annual premium to Life Insurance of Corporation of India under a specially designed group Insurance policy for parents/guardians of persons with mental retardation whose annual income is ₹12,000 or less per year. After the demise

of the parents / guardians of the mentally retarded person, the nominee will get a one-time lump sum amount of ₹20,000 for the maintenance of the person with retardation.

As per the information furnished by six⁸ test-checked districts, 787 persons were enrolled under the scheme. However, the details of registration were not placed on record. The DDWOs were forwarding the same list every year to the Directorate and there were no additions. This indicates that the Department had not taken steps to publicise the scheme to identify new beneficiaries.

The State Government stated that the District Disabled Welfare Officers would be directed to create awareness about the usefulness of the scheme at the district level beneficiaries.

5.3.2.3 Adhara – Self Employment Scheme

Under the scheme, financial assistance of ₹20,000 would be provided to the eligible persons as interest free working capital along with a kiosk worth ₹15,000 for setting up petty business. As per the information furnished by test-checked districts, an amount of ₹2.23 crore was disbursed to 1,113 beneficiaries during the period 2014-15 to 2017-18 as working capital. It was seen that only ₹32,000 was recovered in Mysuru district and ₹5,000 was recovered in Bagalakote district while there were no recoveries in the remaining districts. The State Government subsequently waived (June 2016) ₹11.08 crore being the outstanding loan not repaid by beneficiaries since 1995-96 till 2013-14.

The State Government revised (August 2018) the above scheme wherein the beneficiary would be provided a maximum assistance of one lakh rupees per unit (₹50,000 as bank loan and ₹50,000 as back-end subsidy). The scheme was not implemented in 2018-19 even though a budget allotment of ₹3.36 crore was made and during 2019-20, only ₹1.43 crore was spent against ₹3.90 crore released. The balance amount of ₹2.47 crore lapsed. The Department did not furnish the reasons for not utilising the funds. Evidently, the scheme did not achieve its desired objective of providing self-employment to the PwDs to the maximum extent.

Audit also observed instances of release of back-end subsidy of ₹1.33 crore in test checked 287 cases of ten districts for the period 2019-20 to 2021-22 even before the sanction and disbursement of loan by the banks. Evidently, the Department had failed to ensure sanction of bank loans before crediting the back-end subsidy indicating that funds were drawn to avoid lapse of grants.

The State Government stated that action would be taken to ensure sanction of bank loans before crediting the back-end subsidy.

⁸ There were no enrolments in Bengaluru, Bidar, Dakshina Kannada, Raichur and Ramanagara districts.

5.3.2.4 Distribution of motorised vehicles

The State Government accorded (July 2014) approval for distribution of motorised vehicles to PwDs, subject to fulfilment of conditions, to enable them to travel to their places of duty or learning. During the period 2016-17 to 2021-22, a total of 3,980 vehicles were distributed to PwDs in the test-checked districts.

Illustration

Non-distribution of 82 Motorised Tri Wheel 90 CC TVS BS 6 vehicles despite lapse of three years due to non-preparation of beneficiary list

Motorised Tri Wheel 90 CC TVS BS 6 vehicles (82) were purchased for distribution to differently abled persons in the district of Hassan during the financial year 2019-20 and 2020-21 for ₹59.86 lakh at ₹73,000 per vehicle from the agency and amount was paid to an agency. Audit noticed that as beneficiaries list was yet to be prepared (October 2022) for the period 2019-20 and 2020-21, vehicles were not supplied by the agency. but Memorandum of Understanding was entered into for the period 2019-20 for supply of vehicles after receipt of beneficiary list. However, no agreement was entered into with the agency for the period 2020-21. Even for the period 2021-22, ₹8.55 lakh was released for purchase and distribution of Motorised Tri Wheel vehicles and kept in bank account without being utilised for the purpose for which it was granted on the ground that beneficiary list was not prepared and submitted by ZP.

The State Government stated that beneficiary list for the period 2019-20 was yet to be approved and vehicles were distributed to 39 beneficiaries for period 2020-21.

5.4 Issues due to lack of awareness amongst stakeholders

Non enforcement and lack of awareness amongst the stakeholders related to the RPWD Act in the matters of employment has resulted in PwDs seeking legal interventions to get their rights. A few such cases are discussed below:

5.4.1 Denial of employment due to omissions

As per Section 33 of PwD Act and Section 20 read with Schedule under Section 2-zc of RPWD Act, persons with locomotor disability or cerebral palsy are eligible to write examinations under the physically handicapped quota. Audit noticed an instance of opportunity being denied as explained below:

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) invited (22 June 2017) applications from the prospective candidates for appointment to the posts of Assistant Engineer in the Department of Water Resources. The notification,

however, omitted certain disabilities such as scoliosis⁹. A prospective candidate citing discrimination on the ground of disability in the above notification approached (14 July 2017) the State Commissioner seeking justice.

The Department of Water Resources in response to the summons issued by the State Commissioner deposed (December 2017) that Job identification committee of DWCD/Directorate for the Empowerment of Differently abled and Senior Citizens was consulted and reservation for disabled candidates was decided accordingly. Audit observed that the DWCD in its letter (26 July 2016) had mentioned locomotor disability of cerebral palsy instead of loco motor disability or cerebral palsy. This omission went unnoticed during the entire appointment process. Though the State Commissioner ordered (June 2018) to appoint the candidate subject to eligibility, it was not implemented.

Thus, despite the existence of law, opportunity was denied not only the to the petitioner but other prospective candidates with similar disabilities. The order of the State Commissioner was not complied with by the Government Department. The State Government did not offer its comments.

Recommendation 7: The State Government should ensure that schemes are aimed at providing self-employment opportunities supported by MSME/NHFDC.

Recommendation 8: The State Government should implement Niramaya health insurance scheme and consider payment of renewal amount by Government itself to ensure adequate and affordable health services to PwDs. Further, insurance scheme for parents/guardians should be improvised in providing additional financial benefits to the members/subscribers.

⁹ Scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine that most often is diagnosed in adolescents and can occur in people with conditions such as cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy.

CHAPTER VI

REHABILITATION

Chapter-VI: Rehabilitation

Non-establishment of Manasa Kendras in proposed five districts, District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRCs) in 14 districts, and Day Care Centres in proposed districts, non-availing central assistance for establishment of DDRCs in districts and poor monitoring of working of Manasa Kendras/DDRCs indicate deficiencies in rehabilitation measures as mandated in RPWD Act.

Rehabilitation plays a critical role in empowering individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling and independent lives. Special measures are to be taken to ensure disabled persons enjoy rights equally with others and to protect the PwDs from being subjected to cruelty, inhumane treatments and from all forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation.

As Section 27 of the RPWD Act lays emphasis on rehabilitation, the State Government and local authorities are to undertake services and programmes for rehabilitation particularly in areas of health and employment for all PwDs. Accordingly, Government had established Manasa Kendras, DDRCs and After Care Homes for mentally retarded women *etc.*, as a part of rehabilitation measures as detailed below.

Table 6.1: Details of rehabilitation measures

Sl. No	Name of the institutions	Objectives
1	Manasa Kendras	Short term stays for persons with mental disorders who do not require complete hospitalization
2	After Care Home for Mentally Retarded Women	Home for mentally retarded women aged above 18 years where food and medical facilities are provided.
3	Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	Extension of financial assistance to voluntary organisations to provide services necessary for the rehabilitation of PwDs.
4	District Disability Rehabilitation Centre	To provide comprehensive rehabilitation services at the doorstep of beneficiaries.
5	Day Care Centres	For children with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities

Source: Information furnished by the Department

Audit observed that as against an amount of ₹441.41 crore released during the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, ₹370.52 crore was spent towards rehabilitation of PwDs including grants to Manasa Kendras, DDRCs and After Care Homes for men and women. Audit observations such as functioning of rehabilitation centres with limited staff, failure to utilise central grants optimally for institutions such as DDRCs and DDRCs and non-establishment of Day Care Centres *etc.*, noticed in functioning of these institutions are discussed in subsequent paras in this chapter.

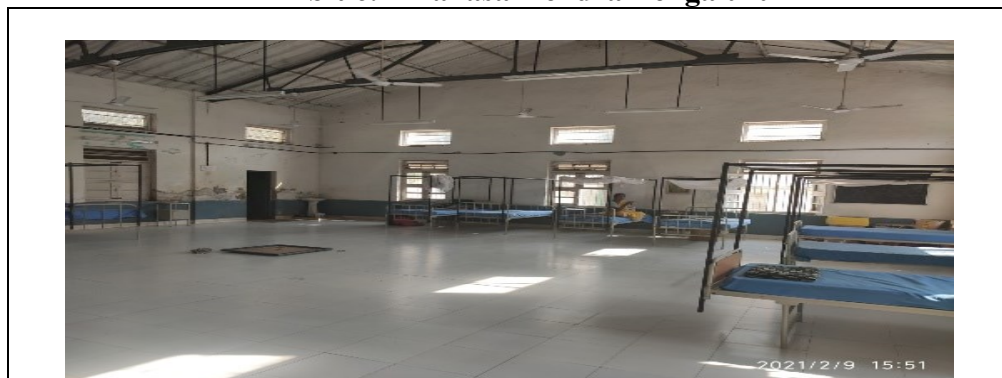
6.1 Manasa Kendras

With a view to provide residential facility to persons with mental disorders who do not require complete hospitalization but cannot function in the community without adequate professional supervision and support, the

Department proposed (August 2006) to set up Manasa Kendras (MKs) in the State. The State Government accorded (August 2007) its sanction to set up five MKs at Ballari, Belagavi, Bengaluru, Raichur and Shivamogga. Each Manasa Kendra was sanctioned a total of 17 posts, which included Social Worker and Psychiatrist. However, only two of the five MKs established are functioning.

In Manasa Kendra Bengaluru, Audit noticed that the Psychiatrist was visiting only once in fifteen days, as against the requirement of once a week for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Exhibit 6.1 Manasa Kendra Bengaluru



Source: Photographs taken during Joint Physical Verification

It was also observed that 48 inmates undergoing treatment in the MK had absconded during the period 2011-12 to 2021-22 and only two were traced so far. In the Exit Conference, it was stated that it was a serious issue and action would be taken to avoid such incidents in future.

In MK Belagavi, out of the sanctioned strength of 17 staff, only 11 were working. All the four sanctioned nurse posts were vacant since 2015-16, and only two nurses had worked since inception up to 2014-15 as a result, inmates care was compromised despite regular visits made by doctors. The State Government did not offer any comments.

Further, the State Government also proposed (December 2016) to hand over the maintenance of MKs to the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, a globally recognised institute in the area of mental health and neurosciences. NIMHANS had prepared and submitted a pilot project/blueprint for taking over MK, Bengaluru for an initial period of three years and if proved successful, it was ready to take over the other MKs. The Project also proposed to establish an Orphan Care Centre for mentally disabled women to provide professional psychiatric treatment to bring them back to mainstream society.

The lack of initiative on part of the Department to hand over maintenance of MKs to NIMHANS resulted in depriving adequate professional medical supervision and support for patients with mental disorder. In Exit Conference, it was stated that action will be taken to coordinate with NIMHANS with submitted blueprint for taking over of MKs.

6.2 After Care Home for Mentally Retarded Women

The State Government established (1972) the After Care Home for Mentally Retarded Women with the specific objective of providing care, protection, shelter, medical and psychiatric treatment and training (wherever possible) to mentally retarded women and girls above 18 years who are residents of Karnataka. The inmates admitted through orders of Courts/Director of Women and Child/DCs are provided with food, shelter, clothing and bedding and segregated as mild, moderate, profound and severely mentally retarded based on NIMHANS doctors' medical certificate.

The State Government sanctioned (March 1972 and January 1983) 34 posts for running the institution which was revised to 27 while transferring the management of the institute from the Department of Women and Child Development to Department of Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens in October 2010. The State Government also accorded (March 1995) sanction for creation of two female Medical Officers (eight hours each in two shifts) and supporting technical and non-technical staff to look after the inmates located in Bengaluru Rehabilitation Complex which includes the After Care Home also.

Further, a Managing Committee comprising of Deputy Commissioner (DC), three officials from the Department of Health, Mental Hospitals and NIMHANS, and non-official members (having experience in the field of work with mentally challenged persons), was to be constituted to advise the Director for the proper management of the After Care Home regarding admission and discharge of inmates, training and rehabilitation *etc.*

In this regard, Audit observed the following:

- Though two female medical officers were appointed, they were not attending to the inmates and recording periodical reports about the health and mental status of the inmates (94 inmates).
- The Managing Committee was not formed as a result of which the non-visit of Medical Officers and other related issues could not be addressed.
- Since the institute is specially meant of women and girls, posting a female probationary Officer and Superintendent would help in better understanding and appreciation of the problems to take suitable measures. Audit observed that the Department had posted male Probationary Officer Grade 2 (May 2018) for supervising the working of this institution. Consequent upon receipt of complaints against him, the Officer was deputed (February 2021) to the vacant post of Probationary Officer in the Social Service Complex, Bengaluru and another female Probationary Officer working in the institute was put in charge of the post of Superintendent.

6.3 Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme

In compliance to Section 66 of PWD Act, 1995, the four existing schemes for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities were amalgamated into a single Central Sector Scheme, called the "Scheme to Promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities" in 1999. During April 2003, the amalgamated

scheme was revised and renamed as the "Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme" (DDRS).

Under this Scheme, the Voluntary organisations were provided financial assistance to avail a whole range of services necessary for the rehabilitation of PwDs including early intervention, development of daily living skills, education and training.

Audit observed that only three¹⁰ institutions in the State are receiving funds from GoI under this scheme. It was seen that during the period under review, the State Government had sent only 13 proposals which was less than one *per cent* of the total 2024 proposals received by GoI during this period.

The State Government stated that the proposals of NGOs received, if any, would be recommended and forwarded to Central Government. The reply is not acceptable as guidelines were framed by Central Government, and the State Government failed to take advantage of this central sector scheme to identify and promote more institutions for the benefit of the differently abled citizens of the State.

6.4 District Disability Rehabilitation Centres

The District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC) scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, GoI was being implemented since 1999-2000.

The DDRCs are to facilitate conducting survey and identification of PwDs through camp approach, awareness generation, early detection and intervention, provision/fitment, follow up and repair of assistive devices, therapeutic services such as physiotherapy, speech therapy *etc.*, counselling of persons with disabilities, their parents and family members, arrangement of loans for self-employment, promotion of barrier free environment, and maintaining data of organizations working for the empowerment of PwDs in the district.

Each DDRC was to function under the supervision of a District Management Team (DMT) headed by the District Collector. The DMT was to identify an implementing agency which should preferably be a Red Cross Society or such autonomous/semi-autonomous bodies of State Government or a reputed NGO. Audit findings on the review of implementation of the scheme are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

6.4.1 Establishment of DDRCs

As per the guidelines of the scheme, DDRCs may have a maximum of 12 staff which includes Clinical Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Prosthetist/Orthoptist, Speech Therapist, Mobility Instructor and other technical and supporting staff having specified qualifications. These professionals were to be paid a fixed honorarium as per prescribed norms and should preferably be registered with RCI.

¹⁰ Sri Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind, Bengaluru, Vishwadhama Mahila and Makkala Shikshana Sevashrama Samithi, Dharwad and Sri Ramana Maharshi Trust for Disabled Persons, KGF.

The State Government initially established DDRCs in eight districts through Central Assistance from 1999-2000 and from the year 2011-12 started funding these institutions through budgetary allocations. Subsequently, the State Government accorded (May 2016) approval for establishing DDRCs in all the districts of the State and provided for a total budget of ₹10.80 crore by enhancing the annual grant from the existing ₹28 lakh to ₹36 lakh per centre. At present there are 16 DDRCs in the State.

6.4.1.1 Functioning of DDRCs

A review of the functioning of the DDRCs showed that the duties to be performed by DDRC staff were similar to the duties being discharged by the Village Rehabilitation Workers at the Gram Panchayat level and Multi-Purpose Rehabilitation Workers (MRWs) at the Taluk level such as identification of persons for Physically Handicapped Pension (PHP), issue of disability certificate, identify cards, bus pass, implementation of Aadhaar scheme *etc.* Consequently, the role of DDRC in the above matters was negligible and amounted to duplication of work.

Audit test-checked eight DDRCs out of the existing 16 DDRCs. The observations noticed during the review of records of the test checked DDRCs are as below:

- Camps were to be conducted in villages for identifying children with disabilities and to provide them with necessary support. This required the participation of technical staff such as Prosthetics and Orthotics Engineer, Speech Therapist, Mobility Instructor and Ear Mould Technician. However, camps were conducted without technical staff as these posts were vacant since establishment of these DDRCs. Consequently, the camps were just restricted to identifying beneficiaries and therapeutic services were not provided.
- In DDRCs of Hassan, Haveri and Raichur, the records did not indicate the place where camps were held and most of the columns in the prescribed format were blank indicating inadequate documentation and raising concerns on the genuineness of the activities undertaken.
- Promotion of barrier free environment was one of the objectives of DDRC. Except DDRC, Chitradurga, none of the other DDRCs had identified public places/buildings for creation of barrier free environment.
- Workshops were not established in four¹¹ DDRCs and though established in the four¹² DDRCs, it was either being underutilised or not being utilised due to vacancies in technical staff.

Audit also observed from the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020, by Director with district officers that the staff of DDRCs were being utilised by the Red Cross Societies, which were managing the affairs of DDRCs, for their own activities. Similarly, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mysuru had reported (March 2020) about having received complaints such as staff of

¹¹ Bidar, Hassan, Haveri and Raichur.

¹² Bengaluru, Chitradurga, Dakshina Kannada and Mysuru.

DDRC working at other places and staff instigating persons visiting DDRC to go to private therapy clinics for availing therapeutic services of Physiotherapist.

The State Government stated that the nodal officers concerned were instructed to conduct medical camps for a period of three days in a week and initiate steps to implement the scheme as per the guidelines. It was also stated that all the Deputy commissioners, Heads of the Departments and DDRCs were directed to provide the barrier free environment in all public places as per the provisions of the Section 40-46 of RPWD Act, 2016 and Harmonised guidelines of Government of India.

Illustration

DDRC, Bidar

Established in September 2019 through Sri Siddeshwar Handicapped Persons Education Society.

Though Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist, ENT specialist, Ophthalmologist, Ear Mould Technician etc., were shown as working, there were no supporting records/registers indicating the number of cases handled, period of treatment given etc. Records in support of having conducted camps were also not available indicating that camps were not conducted since establishment of DDRC, Bidar. However, an amount of ₹60.19 lakh was drawn for payment of honorarium to the staff of DDRC during the period 2019-20 to 2021-22.

There were discrepancies between the Appointment letters issued and the salary statements in respect of Accountant cum clerk, Computer operator, as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Discrepancies between appointment and actual working

(Amount in ₹)

Post	Name as per Appointment letter	Name as per salary drawn register	Salary per month	Salary drawn from April 2019 to November 2020
Accountant cum Clerk	Shri Rajkumar	Keerti	12,000	2,40,000
Computer Operator	Shri Shivakumar	Sangeetha	9,000	1,62,000

Source: Information furnished by DDRC, Bidar

The State Government stated that compliance report was sought from the office of the District Disabled Welfare Officer, Bidar, and Chairman of the organisation on audit findings and steps would be taken to implement the program as per the plan guidelines in this district.

Illustration**DDRC Ramanagara**

The State Government accorded (July 2014) approval to M/s Samarthanam Trust for Disabled, Bengaluru to commence DDRC, Ramanagara and released (August 2014 and February 2015) ₹12.04 lakh. The DMT recommended (August 2016) for closure of DDRC following discrepancies noticed in the functioning such as appointment of staff without notification inviting applications from prospective candidates and without informing DMT/Department, drawing salary for staff from September 2014 without performing duties, non-furnishing of monthly reports to DDWO etc.

Audit observed from the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2016 that the staff appointed were working at two places simultaneously. The Director directed (June 2018), the DDWO, Ramanagara to recover the amount of ₹12.04 lakh from the Trust. The amount was yet to be recovered (December 2022).

The State Government stated that DDWO Ramanagara had filed a case against the organisation for its failure to run the project and the case is pending before Hon'ble District Court Ramanagara

6.4.1.2 Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (SIPDA)

The GoI formulated (January 2016) the Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (SIPDA) under which grants are provided to the State Governments and various other bodies set up by the Central and State Governments including Autonomous Bodies and Universities to support various activities like providing barrier free environment, skill development, awareness campaign and sensitisation programmes etc.

From 2018-19, the funding of the DDRC Scheme was brought under SIPDA. It was however, observed that no funds were requested by the State Government under this scheme and therefore lost the opportunity for providing comprehensive services to PwDs at the grass root level in the districts even when DDRCs are yet to be established in 14 districts. The State Government did not offer its comments.

6.5 District Early Intervention Centres

All activities such as motor, speech and language, intelligence, vision, hearing is controlled by different centres in the brain. Maximum growth of the brain occurs in utero (50 to 55 per cent) and in the first three years (90 per cent). The purpose of early intervention services is to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and minimize the need for special education and related services after they reach school age.

One of the main objectives of DDRC was to provide comprehensive services to the PwDs including sensitizing on early intervention methods. Further, each DDRC was to set up an early intervention unit and low-cost intervention using locally available material for continuing the intervention at place of their residence. Even though the management of DDRCs were taken over by the

State Government, in the absence of specific guidelines for functioning of these Centres, the Department could not set up any early intervention units.

The State Government stated that the Department of Health and Family Welfare Services, Karnataka was requested to establish District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) in all the district hospitals and 13 DEICs have been established in the State with effect from 2016-17.

6.6 Establishment of Day Care Centres

The State Government proposed (May 2017) to establish Day Care Centres (DCCs) for children with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities in the four revenue divisions and issued (May 2017) guidelines. As per the guidelines, each DCC was eligible for a maximum grant of ₹25 lakh (₹10,000 per child for 25 children for 10 months) and the teacher student ratio was fixed at 1:3. Only two DCCs were established (both in Bengaluru) as a result of this, children with above disabilities were deprived of facilities like physiotherapy being offered in DCCs. Though it was again proposed (January 2020) to set up DCCs in the revenue divisions in addition to the existing two in Bengaluru, the Department was yet to establish these DCCs. The State Government did not offer its comments.

Recommendation 9: The State Government should address staff shortage, improve infrastructure facilities, and establish DDRCs in all districts to strengthen rehabilitation mechanism. It should bring DDRCs under the control of DDWOs for effective functioning of DDRCs.



**Bengaluru
The**

**(Shanthi Priya S)
Principal Accountant General (Audit I)
Karnataka**

Countersigned



**New Delhi
The**

**(Girish Chandra Murmu)
Comptroller and Auditor General of India**

Appendices

Appendix 3.1
(Reference: Para no. 3.1.2/Page 28)
Statement showing the compliance to provisions of RPWD Act by
KSRTC and BMTC

Provision	Compliance as furnished by	
	KSRTC (8673 buses)	BMTC (6603 buses)
Designation of priority seats	Complied	Complied
Priority seats to be provided with appropriate facility for securing clutches, canes, walkers <i>etc.</i>	As majority of Type I city buses operated in KSRTC are converted buses (<i>i.e.</i> , express buses are converted to city/rural buses after certain kms), these provisions are not made. However, care will be taken to ensure that these facilities will be provided in the newly inducted city buses	In 150 AC (JnNURM-II) buses, priority seats are provided with appropriate facilities. However, care will be taken to ensure that these facilities will be provided in future.
Handrails and / or stanchions are to be provided at the entrance of all Type I buses in a configuration, which allows persons with disabilities to grasp such assists from outside the vehicle while starting to board, until they reach the designated seating area.	Hand grabs, handrails, stanchions, handholds, seat handles <i>etc.</i> , were provided right from the entrance step till the driver compartment in all buses irrespective of type to enable easy and safe movement of passengers.	Hand grabs, handrails, stanchions, handholds, seat handles <i>etc.</i> , were provided right from the entrance step till the driver compartment in all buses irrespective of type to enable easy and safe movement of passengers.
All Type I NDX buses are to be provided with controls adjacent to priority seats for requesting stops and which alerts the driver that a mobility aid user wishes to disembark.	This provision was not complied with as most of the buses were converted from Express buses. However, out of 1,549 Type I NDX buses, 487 buses which were inducted during JnNURM scheme have been provided with such controls.	2,627 out of 6,603 Type I NDX buses have been provided with such controls and care would be taken to provide such controls in future.
Lift Mechanism Facility	49 Volvo buses have kneeling mechanism which would facilitate easy entry of PwDs. In the remaining buses which are high floor buses, providing lift mechanism would involve major structural changes in design and is technically not feasible.	823 Volvo city buses have kneeling mechanism which would facilitate easy entry of PwDs. In the remaining buses, providing lift mechanism would involve major structural changes in design and is technically not feasible.
Audio alert system for the visually challenged	812 buses are ITS enabled having audio alert system where announcement is made both in English and Kannada.	5,000 buses are ITS enabled having audio alert system where announcement is made both in English and Kannada.
Fitted with buzzers and switches	487 buses are fitted with buzzers and switches and 844 are fitted with panic buttons.	2,627 buses are fitted with buzzers and switches and 1,150 are fitted with panic buttons.
Rings for holding canes used by the visually challenged.	This provision was complied with in all buses.	This provision was complied with in all buses.

Source: Information furnished by KSRTC and BMTC

Appendix 4.1
(Reference: Para no. 4.2.3/Page 36)

Details of students appeared/not appeared for Music examination

District / School	Total students	Appeared (per cent)	Passed	Availability of Music Teacher	Number of years appeared for exam	Number of years not appeared for exam
Government Blind Schools (4)						
Mysuru	151	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Davanagere	50	8 (16)	08	Appointed	3	2
Hubballi	106	19 (18)	19	Appointed	3	2
Kalaburagi	72	5 (7)	05	Appointed	1	4
Total	379	32 (8)	32			
Grant in Aid Schools (6)						
Maheshwari School for Blind, Belagavi	499	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Ambubai Blind School for Girls, Kalaburagi	220	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Mathrushri Education Trust for the Blind, Yelahanka, Bengaluru	149	5(3)	5	Appointed	1	4
Teekshna Blind School, Chitradurga	39	0	0	Appointed	0	5
M Krishna School for Blind, Hassan	40	0	0	Not Appointed	0	5
Asha Kirana School for Blind, Chikkamagaluru	315	0	0	Not Appointed	0	5
Total	1,262	5(1)	5			
Child Centric Schools (9)						
Asha Kirana School for blind Bidar	191	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Sajeevi Residential School for VI Children, Bagalakote	236	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Roman and Catherin Lobo Residential Blind Children School, Mangaluru	80	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Jnanajyothi Blind Children Residential School, Haveri	242	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Sri Manik Prabhu Blind Residential School, Humnabad, Bidar	229	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Sri Manik Prabhu Blind Residential School, Raichur	174	0	0	Appointed	0	5
Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamy Blind Residential School, Ramanagara	765	11(1)	06	Appointed	2	3
Rangarao Memorial School for disabled (Blind Girls), Mysuru	330	16 (5)	16	Appointed	5	0
Karnataka Welfare Association for Blind Bengaluru	198	0	0	Not appointed	0	5
Total	2,445	27 (1)				

Source: Information furnished by schools
Figures in parentheses indicates percentage

Appendix 4.2
(Reference: Para no. 4.5.1/Page 43)
Absence of infrastructure facilities in Regular Schools

District	Ramps	Without Ramps	Handrails	Without Handrails	CWSN Toilets	Without CWSN Toilets	Schools
Bagalakote	1,989	268	1,830	427	424	1,833	2,257
Ballari	793	403	628	568	341	855	1,196
Belagavi	4,228	968	3,806	1,390	882	4,314	5,196
Bengaluru Rural	1,034	452	906	580	320	1,166	1,486
Bengaluru Urban	2,235	3,223	1,612	3,846	2,622	2,836	5,458
Bidar	1,467	1,146	1,046	1567	795	1,818	2,613
Chamarajanagar	771	362	536	597	398	735	1,133
Chikkamagaluru	1,349	501	1,140	710	404	1,446	1,850
Chikkaballapur	964	955	785	1,134	424	1,495	1,919
Chitradurga	2,060	307	1,873	494	537	1,830	2,367
Dakshina Kannada	1,720	81	1,358	443	1,520	281	1,801
Davanagere	1,485	553	1,223	815	771	1,267	2,038
Dharwad	997	516	845	668	425	1,088	1,513
Gadag	962	139	867	234	264	837	1,101
Hassan	2,385	634	1,894	1,125	488	2,531	3,019
Haveri	1,541	334	1,248	627	317	1,558	1,875
Kalaburagi	2,421	1,183	1,822	1,782	1,110	2,494	3,604
Kodagu	574	60	547	87	207	427	634
Kolar	1,168	1,243	882	1,529	569	1,842	2,411
Koppal	1,100	478	878	700	365	1,213	1,578
Mandya	2,231	125	2,073	283	603	1,753	2,356
Mysuru	2,517	565	2,241	841	752	2,330	3,082
Raichur	1,372	1,034	1,077	1,329	630	1,776	2,406
Ramanagara	1,281	421	1,045	657	395	1,307	1,702
Shivamogga	2,203	437	1,850	790	680	1,960	2,640
Tumakuru	2,863	1,529	2,437	1,955	758	3,634	4,392
Udupi	946	162	774	334	386	722	1,108
Uttara Kannada	2,384	172	2,204	352	424	2,132	2,556
Vijayanagara	1,209	494	1,050	653	589	1,114	1,703
Vijayapura	2,218	1,116	1,688	1,646	848	2,486	3,334
Yadgiri	997	505	822	680	261	1,241	1,502
Total	51,464	20,366	42,987	28,843	19,509	52,321	71,830

Source: Information furnished by the Department

Appendix 4.3

(Reference: Para no. 4.5.2/Page 43)

Absence of infrastructure facilities in Special Schools

District	Name of the School	Audit observations
Bidar	Shri Manik Prabhu Blind Residential School, Humnabad, Bidar District	Toilets/bathrooms for boys were not available in the same buildings as it were situated 50 meters away in opposite campus (10 toilets/bathrooms) and boys had to go down from first floor to the toilet and bathroom.
Haveri	Arunodaya Residential School for MR Children, Koda, Hirekerur	Toilets were without doors and entrances of toilets/bathroom were very narrow and chances of skidding were more as path to bathrooms was slippery. The windows of classrooms and hostel rooms were not having doors and ventilators were not covered and kept open in the hostel room for boys. For residential purpose, one room (for boys) was available with seven cots but without pillows and mattresses. Mosquito nets were also not available.
Bagalakote	Shiva Shikshana MR School, Mudhol	Two girls hostel rooms (8x 8 sq.ft each) for 20 students and one Boys hostel room (25x11 sq.ft) for 50 students were there in the school. Hostel for Boys and classrooms were constructed with asbestos sheet roof and hostel room floors was rough and not suitable for sleeping. There was one big hall which was converted into 10 classrooms through partitions.
Bagalakote	Sri Murugendra Shivacharya Mahaswami Samsthe Deaf and Dumb Residential School, Ilkal, Bagalkote	There were no cots for girl students (36 members) who sleep on floor and the flooring was rough in Girl's Hostel room.
Hassan	Jeevan Jyothi Residential School for Deaf, Hassan	Combined classrooms for 1 and 2, 3 and 4,5 and 6, 7 and 8 classes and the passage on the first floor and at the stair case was very narrow. There were no cots, only mattresses were available and there were no tables in the dining hall.
Raichur	Asha Deepa School for MR children, Raichur	There are two classrooms, one measuring 12x18 sq. ft and another was a shed that was partitioned with curtains accommodating 49 students. Chairs and tables were not provided and only two toilets were available in the school.
Bagalakote	Sarvodaya Deaf and Dumb School, Ilkal, Jamkhandi	Management was running both school and hostel in three different locations (for boys and girls). Even girls' hostel was also located far away from boys hostel and for dinner/lunch/ breakfast purpose, disabled girls were forced to walk for nearly half a kilometre every time for dinner/lunch/ breakfast purpose.
Belagavi	Ajay Deaf and Dumb School	There is no concrete wall and roof on the first floor and unsafe for students. There was no separate dining hall available and as the school is located in big shed, dining hall is being used as both dining hall and classrooms.
Kalaburagi	Government school for Blind, Boys	Classes were being conducted in school which was declared unfit by Public Works Department for conducting classes since it was constructed 60 years back.

Source: Joint inspection reports of special schools

Appendix 5.1
(Reference: Para no. 5.2.5/Page 53)
Details of schemes implemented by NHFDC

Name of the Scheme	Objectives
Jan Aushadi Kendras	Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses. Keeping in view the importance of PMBJP and its potential as a self-employment model for PwDs, NHFDC had informed (April 2017) the Department to send names of at least 50 eligible PwDs for establishing Jan Aushadhi Kendras in the State.
NHFDC Swavalamban Kendra (NSK)	NHFDC rolled out the concept of NSK by converging the credit needs, skilling needs, assured business linkage needs, <i>etc.</i> , on pilot scale basis initially covering each district in the country at the rate of one NSK per district. Each NSK is established at a capital cost of around ₹12 lakh by PwD entrepreneurs with 100 <i>per cent</i> financing from NHFDC. These NSKs will be used as mini-incubation centres to train the PwDs for self-employment opportunities in and around their localities.
Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana	Under this scheme, NHFDC provides financial assistance in the form of loan up to ₹50 lakh to PwDs for self-employment activity at the rate of interest five to nine <i>per cent</i> for starting any activity contributing directly or indirectly in the income generation or helping PwDs to pursue skill development courses, undergraduate, post-graduate and other professional courses.
Vishesh Microfinance Yojana	NHFDC, with a view to encourage small/micro business and developmental activities both for promoting sustainable and inclusive livelihoods and facilitating comfortable living for the Divyangjans in the society, extends loan (90 <i>per cent</i> of the project cost) and the balance 10 <i>per cent</i> is to be contributed by the Implementing Agencies or other organizations acting as implementing partner of NHFDC, and/or beneficiaries. The loan amount is to be repaid in quarterly instalments within a maximum period of three years from the date of each disbursement including the moratorium period of three months. The unit cost of Project shall not exceed ₹60,000.

Source: Information as per NHFDC website

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