



3 May 2013

To

The Secretary  
Department of Disability Affairs  
Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Government of India

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sub: Regarding the empowerment of persons with disabilities herewith we are submitting our views and recommendations.

Nethrodaya is a social service organization dedicated to the welfare of the visually impaired community in Tamil Nadu, which is been recognized by Government of Tamil Nadu award for the "Best Institution 2012" in recognition of its outstanding services towards the differently abled persons. Our interventions are designed to elevate the standard of living of the visually challenged in all walks of life and to assist them with the latest technology and assistive devices to enable them to lead a trouble free life. For the empowerment of persons with disabilities herewith we are submitting our views and recommendations for your kind perusal. Our recommendations are:

- 1) Many State Governments issue free bus passes to differently abled bus passengers for local travels and charge concessional ticket fares of  $\frac{1}{4}$  in the fares in respect of long distance bus journeys. As regards train travels, Indian Railways charges  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the ticket fare to differently abled persons for long distance train travels and do not allow any concession to the differently abled persons in respect of local travels. We request you to kindly grant free passes to differently abled passengers to undertake local train travels as being given by the State Governments.
- 2) It is observed that many sighted women come forward to marry visually impaired men. Rarely, sighted men come forward to marry visually impaired women. The Government must encourage and motivate sighted men who are willing to marry visually impaired women, by giving priority

47/1, Nolambur Phase II, Mogappair West, Chennai-600037,

Tamil Nadu, India. Phone :+ 91 44 26565012/26563680

Mobile :+ 91 93828 96636 E mail :nethrodaya@gmail.com Website :www.nethrodaya.org

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to these men by allocating separate quota in the government jobs as being given by Tamilnadu State Government in respect of the men from Forward caste marrying women from SC/ST.

- 3) All citizens of India enjoy the benefit of fuel subsidy while filling petrol/diesel for their two wheeler motor vehicles. Orthopedically challenged persons who use adapted vehicles with more than two wheels which required higher petrol usage than the three wheelers. We request that Government may grant concession in petrol prices in respect of physically challenged vehicle users.
- 4) Government of India provides free CD players to visually impaired students to as assistive device, which has become outdated. We request the Government of India to provide Angel Reader device which has been designed exclusively for the visually impaired students, in future.
- 5) Latest training modules covering new fields which are suitable to the visually impaired students such as reflexology, physiotherapy have to designed and introduced in training institutes run by the Government. Courses that will equip the students to face different competitive examinations may also be introduced.
- 6) National handicapped development finance corporation should simplify the procedures and grant loans to visually handicapped persons without security up to Rs.1,00,000
- 7) At present the visually impaired persons are required to obtain identity card both from State Government as well as Central Government to avail the facilities from the Government, which put them to great difficulties. The central Government, in consultation with State Governments, may introduce a single identity card for the visually impaired persons which can be used anywhere in India.
- 8) E ticketing facilities is made available to all citizens to enable them to book tickets online. However this facility cannot be availed by the visually impaired persons. Indian Railways may be requested to make suitable modifications in the software to enable the visually impaired persons to book tickets online.
- 9) Insurance companies charge higher premium from the visually impaired persons treating this as a disease. But visual impairment is not a disease but a condition. Charging a higher premium

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amounts to denial of equal rights to visually impaired persons. We request that the Insurance companies are advised to charge normal premium from visually impaired persons on par with others.

Looking forward your positive response

Thanking you

C. Govindakrishnan

Founder- Nethrodaya

Member in State Planning Commission

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