



Government Strengthens Welfare and Sporting Opportunities for Differently Abled Youth

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The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has undertaken comprehensive measures during the last five years to promote empowerment, accessibility, skill development and sporting excellence among differently abled youth across the country

Under the **Khelo India Scheme**, focused support is extended through the **Promotion of Sports among Persons with Disabilities** component. Two editions of the **Khelo India Para Games** were organised in Delhi in December 2023 and March 2025. The 2023 edition recorded participation of **1,068** para athletes, while the 2025 edition saw **1,233** athletes compete across multiple disciplines. Overall, more than **2,000** para athletes benefited from national-level exposure through these Games.

The **Sports Authority of India** is implementing **National Centres of Excellence** across the country to identify and nurture para athletes. Gandhinagar has been designated as the nodal centre for Para Sports. At present, **286** para athlete positions have been sanctioned, with **183** residential athletes undergoing structured training across disciplines such as para athletics, badminton, archery, fencing, swimming, powerlifting, table tennis and others.

Elite para athletes are supported under the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme**. Currently, **61** para athletes, including 21 women and 40 men across eight disciplines, are part of the **TOPS Core Group**. The highest representation is in para athletics, followed by para badminton and para archery. **Twenty-four Khelo India para athletes** participated in the **Paris 2024 Paralympic Games** and secured six medals for India.

Financial assistance is provided to recognised **National Sports Federations** such as the **Paralympic Committee of India**, **All India Sports Council for Deaf and Special Olympics Bharat** under the **Assistance to National Sports Federations Scheme** to strengthen training and international participation.

Beyond sports, major efforts have been undertaken in rehabilitation, education and skill development. Under the **Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, fund release increased from **₹83.18 crore** in **2020-21** to **₹139.86 crore** in **2024-25**, benefiting over **34,000** persons annually in recent years.

Under the **Umbrella Scheme for Scholarships for Students with Disabilities**, **₹145.20 crore** was utilised in **2022-23** alone, benefiting **44,162** students across various components including pre-matric, post-matric, top class education, fellowships and overseas scholarships.

The **Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase or Fitting of Aids and Appliances Scheme** has significantly expanded outreach. In **2023-24**, **3,46,273** beneficiaries were covered with utilisation of **₹368.44 crore**.

Vocational rehabilitation services have also strengthened considerably. **Twenty-four National Career Service Centres for Differently Abled** are operational across the country. Beneficiary intake increased from **6,999** in **2020-21** to **47,166** in **2024-25**, reflecting expanded outreach and improved service delivery.

Under the **Skill India Mission**, inclusive skill training is delivered through schemes such as **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme and Craftsmen Training Scheme**. Five courses have been specifically designed for specially abled persons under the Craftsmen Training Scheme to enhance employability.

Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres have covered approximately **19.70 lakh** beneficiaries since inception. **The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Training Centre for Disability Sports** at Gwalior has benefited over **3,000 para athletes** through specialised training programmes. Additionally, around **66,900** beneficiaries have been enrolled under the **Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme** during **2025-26**, with coverage up to **₹1 lakh per annum**.

Sports infrastructure created by the Sports Authority of India incorporates accessible facilities including ramps and barrier-free amenities. The Government continues to undertake periodic review, monitoring and third-party evaluations to ensure effective implementation and measurable impact of these initiatives for differently abled youth across the country

This information was given by the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

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