

MEETING CHALLENGES

Govt proposes new law to protect differently abled

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NEW DELHI: The government will soon bring a law to protect rights of differentially abled persons with higher punishment for crimes committed against them and 5% reservation in government jobs.

The newly created ministry of disability affairs has prepared draft on Rights of Persons With Disabilities Bill in consultation with states governments.

The proposed law would replace the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which many experts feel has failed to do justice with the increasing population of disabled.

The existing law covers only seven types of disabilities leaving aside many mental illnesses, dyslexia and deafness. It is primarily based on the concept that disabled need charity of the society rather than making them a cohesive part of the system.

Javed Abidi of Disabled Rights Group (DRG), who advocated for the new law, says the proposed draft provided for "rights based approach" as against "welfare based" legisla-

THE NEW LAW WILL GIVE 5% JOB RESERVATION AND STRICTER PUNISHMENT FOR CRIME AGAINST DISABLED

tion. "It is a good but not a perfect draft," he said.

The new law, which government officials expect to be finalised soon, widens the definition of disability to include all types and for the first time makes private sector accountable to providing public services in disabled friendly manner.

The draft also proposes to increase reservation for disabled from existing 3% to 5% considering that recent reports, including that of the World Bank, which stated that population of disabled in India ranged from 4% to 8%.

Of that, 1% vacancies in the government departments would be reserved for people having vision problem, hearing or speech impairment, autism, cerebral palsy and mental illness. Creation of the National Fund for Disabilities under the proposed law and special courts for them are other new provisions being proposed.