



## National Human Rights Commission

### Minutes of the Core Group Meeting on Disabilities held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Manav Adhikar Bhavan, New Delhi

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) convened a meeting of the Core Group on Disabilities, on the topic '**Human Rights Violations emerging from re-verification and re-assessment of certificates of Government Employees with Disabilities**' on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Manav Adhikar Bhavan, New Delhi in hybrid mode. The meeting was chaired by Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC Justice V. Ramasubramanian. Hon'ble Members Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal; Director General (Investigation) Mrs. Anupama Nilekar Chandra; Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh; Joint Secretaries Shri Samir Kumar and Ms. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, and other officers were present. The participants comprised representatives from the government, members of the core group, Special Rapporteurs, Special Monitors, academicians, NGOs and other eminent domain experts and special invitees. The list of participants is **annexed**.



2. **Ms. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC**, welcomed all the participants and introduced the agenda of the core group meeting and outlined the focus area and key themes of the deliberation, namely: i.) harmonising administrative oversight with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ii.) ensuring dignity and non-discrimination during verification processes and iii.) strengthening digital verification mechanisms through the UDID framework.

3. In his opening remarks, while setting the agenda for discussion, **Shri Bharat Lal**, Secretary General, NHRC, reiterated two essential principles that must guide all actions: first, that persons with disabilities must always be treated with respect and dignity; and second, that authorities also have a responsibility to ensure that benefits are not given to ineligible persons. He noted that while the October 15, 2025, SOP-cum-notification was issued in good faith, its implementation on the ground appeared in some cases to have gone beyond what was originally intended to. He further mentioned that the SOP-cum-notification issued by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities envisaged genuineness of the disability certificate, correct assessment of disability type and percentage to meet functional requirements of job/ course and ensuring an appellate mechanism. He emphasized that dignity must remain central while also preventing misuse. He observed that when societal values weakened and misuse occurs, it is often genuine people with disabilities who ultimately suffer.



4. **Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, while giving context behind this meeting that was raised by Dr. Satendra Singh, Core Group Member and Director-Professor of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital, noted that in India, we all have good laws, but the problems in implementation emerge as a result of the colonial mindset that we have inherited, due to which the citizens have a hard time accessing the benefits that the laws have granted to them. He shared a case example involving the denial of family pension to a woman with severe disability, despite entitlement, due to repeated demands for documentation. He emphasized that while some families were able to seek redressal, many others lacked awareness or access to institutions like NHRC for redressal of their agony. He further acknowledged that misuse exists across beneficiary schemes in the country and that this was a broader societal concern. However, he stressed that this should not result in genuine beneficiaries being denied or delayed access to their rights. He observed that societal value systems appeared to be weakening and that safeguards were needed to protect those who truly deserved support. He further added that the purpose of the meeting is to listen to domain experts and stakeholders. Based on the discussion, the Commission intends to send recommendations to the government to ensure corrective measures.

5. **Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi**, Hon'ble Member, NHRC, emphasized that proper attention needs to be given to the issue of human rights violations that have arisen from the process of re-verification and re-assessment of disability certificates. He further added the importance of streamlining the process of issuing disability certificates.



6. **Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani**, Hon'ble Member, NHRC, provided suggestions such as eliminating the need to re-issue certificates of employees living with irreversible disabilities, time-bound assessment of disabled employees, online documentation and video consultation of government employees with disabilities for verification of their certificates.



7. **Dr. Satendra Singh**, Director-Professor, University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital, acknowledged the prompt action of the Commission for convening the meeting and highlighted developments in States such as Maharashtra and Rajasthan, where newly notified rules mandated re-verification of disability certificates of government employees, compelling them to undergo fresh certification. He cited cases

demonstrating harassment, mental distress and institutional humiliation resulting from intrusive medical examinations and argued that such practices violated the right to dignity under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution. He further stated that retrospective imposition of re-verification through State rules was legally impermissible and inconsistent with the RPwD Act, 2016 and the earlier 1995 Act.



8. **Shri Rajeev Sharma**, Joint Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, highlighted concerns regarding the conduct of disability assessments in camp mode. He acknowledged reports from departments, media and society regarding fraudulent disability certificates. On the issue of reassessment, he clarified that the primary intent of the Department was to ensure due diligence at the stage of admission to higher educational institutions and recruitment to government jobs. He referred to Section 91 of the RPwD Act, 2016, which prescribes penalties for fraudulent claims, including imprisonment and fines. He stated that the Department's intent was high-resolution scrutiny of disability certification at the entry stage. However, he acknowledged that fraud could sometimes surface later, citing instances where individuals were detected long after induction into service. He clarified that action taken in such cases was legally justified under the Act.



9. **Dr. S Govindaraj**, Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities, stated that the core concern before the group was to understand the gap, if any, between the original intent of the guidelines and what was happening on the ground. He emphasized the importance of identifying whether deviations were occurring during implementation and, if so, how they could be corrected. He noted that, based on the subject under discussion, it could be clearly stated that blanket reassessment should neither be encouraged nor routinely carried out, as such practices disturbed many genuine cases. Dr. Govindaraj further observed that the existing guidelines emphasized validation rather than mass reassessment. However, he noted that these guidelines appeared to have been interpreted differently during implementation. He stated that need-based verification and reverification were essential, and reassessment should be mandated only in unavoidable circumstances. He concluded by reiterating that verification mechanisms must remain targeted and proportional, ensuring that genuine persons with disabilities were not unnecessarily inconvenienced, while also addressing suspected misuse in a structured and fair manner.



10. **Dr. Purva Mittal**, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi and NHRC's Special Monitor (Women and Disability issues), acknowledged the legitimacy of verification to protect system integrity but expressed concern over blanket medical re-assessment of government employees with disabilities, including those with permanent and visible disabilities and valid UDID-linked certificates. She highlighted concerns of legality, proportionality and dignity, stating that executive advisories could not override statutory safeguards under the RPwD Act.

11. **Prof. (Dr.) Amita Dhandha**, Professor, NALSAR, stated that while misuse must be addressed, the rights of persons with disabilities must take precedence. She reiterated that re-verification should be applied only where *prima facie* reasons existed and not universally.

12. **Shri Rajive Raturi**, Strategic Advisor, Saksham Trust, supported the Government's initiative from the perspective of aspirants for Group C and D posts, endorsing a one-time assessment to identify and eliminate wrongful availing of disability reservations so that benefits reach genuine candidates. He raised concerns about weaknesses in the existing certification process, particularly UDID assessments conducted through camps without adequate medical expertise, leading to referrals to private practitioners and increasing the risk of misuse and emphasised the need for accountability for doctors issuing fake certificates.



13. **Dr. Vaibhav Bhandari**, Founder, Swavlamban Foundation, highlighted systemic gaps in disability assessment, including improper classification of permanent disabilities as temporary, incorrect categorisation of conditions, absence of specialised professionals at the district level and lack of scientific diagnostic facilities, which collectively contributed to erroneous certification and hardship. He stressed the need for clearer SOPs, multidisciplinary assessment teams, diagnostic infrastructure and capacity-building.



14. **Shri Akhil Paul**, Director, Sense International (India), stressed the need to move away from institutional suspicion and establish UDID as a single source of truth, opposing blanket reassessment and advocating for case-by-case re-assessment with procedural fairness.

15. **Shri Muralidharan Vishwanath**, General Secretary, National Platform for the Rights of Disabled, cautioned against generalised suspicion being cast on the entire disability community and supported case-based re-assessment.

16. **Shri Arman Ali**, Executive Director, NCPEDP, stated that re-verification at the stage of admission reflected systemic issues and reiterated that re-assessment must be strictly need-based and not routine.



17. **Shri Nipun Malhotra**, Co-Founder, Nipman Foundation, questioned the repeated burden placed on persons with disabilities to prove their disability, describing the process as emotionally and financially exhausting and urged implementation of Section 91 of the RPwD Act instead of repeated reassessment.

18. **Shri Nityanand Srivastava**, Special Rapporteur, NHRC, stated that the RPwD Act already provided appellate mechanisms to address misuse and emphasised the need to redesign verification and reassessment processes to avoid the difficulties currently faced by persons with disabilities.

19. **Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah**, NHRC's Special Monitor (Elementary Education and Literacy), highlighted infrastructural and capacity gaps in district hospitals, particularly in assessing multiple disabilities and stressed the need to strengthen assessment facilities so that persons with disabilities were not forced to struggle for certification.

20. **Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, in his concluding remarks, identified three critical issues for consideration based on the discussion, namely: i.) Should the Government seek re-verification or re-assessment of the certificates of persons with disabilities who have already enjoyed the benefits? ii.) Whether such SOPs will have retrospective or prospective effect? and iii.) Whether mass re-verification is permissible or the re-verification or re-assessment should be limited to only those whose certificates are under suspicion?



21. The meeting ended with a formal vote of thanks proposed by **Ms. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak**, Joint Secretary, NHRC.

## List of participants

### **National Human Rights Commission, India**

- i.) Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson
- ii.) Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Hon'ble Member
- iii.) Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member
- iv.) Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General
- v.) Ms. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation)
- vi.) Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law)
- vii.) Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary
- viii.) Ms. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary
- ix.) Dr.(Ms.) Rajul Raikwar, Consultant (Research)
- x.) Ms. Anugya Srivastava, Junior Research Consultant
- xi.) Ms. Vintee Sangwan, Research Assistant
- xii.) Ms. Eukti Garg, Junior Research Consultant
- xiii.) Ms. Lakshmi Kumari, Junior Research Consultant
- xiv.) Ms. Stuti Joshi, Junior Research Consultant

### **Core Group Members**

- i.) Shri Rajeev Sharma, Joint Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (joined virtually)
- ii.) Dr. S. Govindaraj, Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities
- iii.) Prof. Amita Dhanda, Professor, NALSAR (joined virtually)
- iv.) Dr. Satendra Singh, Director-Professor of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital
- v.) Shri Arman Ali, Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People (NCPEDP), New Delhi
- vi.) Shri Nipun Malhotra, Co-Founder, Nipman Foundation
- vii.) Shri Rajive Raturi, Strategic Advisor, Saksham Trust
- viii.) Shri Akhil S. Paul, Director, Sense International, (joined virtually)

### **Special Invitees**

- i.) Dr. Purva G. Mittal, Asst. Prof, University of Delhi and Special Monitor, NHRC (Women and Disability issues)
- ii.) Dr. Vaibhav Bhandari, Founder, Swavlamban Foundation
- iii.) Shri Muralidharan Vishwanath, General Secretary, National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (joined virtually)

### **Other eminent guests**

- i.) Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah, Special Monitor, NHRC (Elementary Education and Literacy) (joined virtually)
- ii.) Shri Nityanand Srivastava, Special Rapporteur, NHRC (joined virtually)
- iii.) Shri Subhash Chandra, Special Rapporteur, NHRC (joined virtually)