

**Status report on implementation**

**Of**

**PWD Act in the state of Orissa**

**Prepared and submitted to NHRC**

By,

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## **Acknowledgement:**

With utmost sincerity do I thank the National Human Rights Commission, particularly, its Hon'ble Chairperson, and, all the other Hon'ble members, for permitting and facilitating this important review exercise carried out by me on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of august this year in order to identify gaps in the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (hereinafter called the PWD Act, or simply the Act for reasons of brevity) in the state of Orissa.

My heart felt gratitude is also due to the Govt. of Orissa, particularly, the Dept. of women and Child Development, (W and CD), state Commissioner (for persons with disabilities), (SCpd), Govt. of Orissa, members of the State Coordination Committee (SCC), and persons with disabilities of Orissa for their active participation, support and cooperation in conducting the said review exercise.

## **Part one:**

### **Introductory**

This brief status report on the implementation of the existing Pwd Act in the state of Orissa is the offshoot of a visit undertaken by me to Bhubaneswar from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of August this year. The actual review exercise was carried out on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2011.

### **Objective/purpose**

Evidently, the objective/purpose of the said visit carried out by me at the behest of the Hon'ble Commission was to identify gaps in the implementation of the existing Pwd Act in the state of Orissa by engaging primarily, with the state Commissioner (for persons with disabilities), Govt. of Orissa, and additionally, by interacting with the officials of the Dept. of Women and Child Development (which, incidentally, also deals with disability related matters/schemes in the state of Orissa), members of the State Coordination committee constituted under the said Act, and persons with disabilities who obviously happen to be the primary stakeholders for the purposes of the said review exercise. Clearly, this review exercise was to culminate into a status report which, among other things, should contain recommendations to ensure effective and expeditious implementation of the said Act by bringing about systemic and other necessary and appropriate changes- --- hence, this status report.

### **Methodology**

Apart from the methodology in-built in the aforesaid objective/purpose, the exercise also involved careful examination and analysis of written information furnished by the concerned SCpd and the dept. of W and CD, Govt. of Orissa.

### **Limitations**

It goes without saying that the said review exercise did have its own inherent limitations as there was no time for field verification/visits. Nevertheless, the review exercise did give a fair and broad idea of the overall status of implementation of the said Act in the state of Orisa.

It also deserves mention that the recommendations contained in this brief status report are only illustrative, and not exhaustive in nature.

#### **Context**

This review exercise was conducted as a part of NHRC's decision to identify gaps in the implementation of the existing PWD Act in various states of the country. A general perception that the PWD Act is not getting implemented fully and properly across the country resulting in large-scale deprivation of rights suffered by persons with disabilities contributed to the said decision by the NHRC.

This review of the state of Orissa is the fifth in the series of reviews carried out by this Special Rapporteur.

The discussions and recommendations in the following sections/parts of this report will reveal the exceedingly sorry state of affairs in relation to implementation of the said Act in the state of Orissa.

Going by the 2001 census, the population of persons with disabilities in the state of Orissa stands at over ten lakh twenty-one thousand. This, we know, is an under-estimation on account of a number of reasons, one of them being that persons belonging to a number of categories of disabilities were altogether left out of the said census. Be that as it may, the 2011 census included disability more comprehensively; and, the 2011 census figures on disability are still awaited. A disability category-wise breakup of population of persons with disabilities as per the 2001 census has been submitted to this special Rapporteur by the state govt. and it may be seen in the Orissa Govt. Information for NHRC, one of the various documents which form part of this status report.

**Part two:**

**Monitoring and Enforcement mechanisms**

The implementation of any legislation, more particularly, a social legislation like the PWD Act hugely depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of its monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

The Persons with Disabilities Act contemplates/envisages certain monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, such as, the State Commissioner (for persons with disabilities) (SCPD), The State coordination committee (SCC), and, the State Executive Committee (SEC).

***State Commissioner (for persons with disabilities) (SCPD).***

Although the PWD Act came into force in the whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir on and from the 7<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 1996, a full-time Commissioner for persons with disabilities with independent charge in the state of Orissa took office on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010. This means that the enforcement and monitoring of the Act suffered an irreparable setback for want of a full-time commissioner for more than fourteen years after the Act came into force. Prior to the appointment of a full-time Commissioner, the position was held by Secretary to the Dept. of W and CD as additional charge who could not devote enough time to the functions of SCPD. I was told that the incumbent who held additional charge devoted barely one hour a week to the work of the SCPD. All this is a sad commentary on the Govt. of Orissa and is reflective only of its utterly casual, cosmetic, and non-serious approach in respect of the matter.

A reading of Section 61 and Section 62 of the Act reveal that the functions of the SCPD revolve around coordination amongst various departments for programmes and schemes, monitoring of utilization of funds for disability related work by Govt., safeguarding rights and facilities for persons with disabilities, taking cognizance of complaints of deprivation of rights suffered by persons with disabilities, etc... While it is a happy augury that the district collectors in Orissa have been designated as Deputy-Commissioners for persons with disabilities, there is nothing to suggest as to whether and to what extent these district collectors are playing a role at the district level in respect of monitoring and enforcement of the Act; or for that matter, in the disposal of grievances.

Narrating the difficulties faced by her in the discharge of her functions under the Act, the incumbent Commissioner complained of utterly inadequate budgetary provision, absence of any regular staff, let alone a staff of the level of an official to assist her, lack of required infrastructure, etc... Referring to a very recent Govt. order, she stated that although she is now to be treated at par with the Principal Secretary, she would only be eligible to get an honorarium to the tune of rupees ten thousand only per month which she complained was unfair as the Commissioner's was a full-time job. On the basis of her experience of being in office for the last 18 months or so, she expressed anguish that no departmental head cares to honour orders/advisories passed by the Commissionerate, and that the orders/advisories are seldom complied with.

Incidentally, the incumbent Commissioner is a non-official and has experience of working in the field of disability. I also got a sense that she has very good rapport with persons with disabilities who happen to be the primary stakeholders under the PWD Act. Further, it was shocking to learn that she, the incumbent commissioner got to know about my visit only the previous afternoon, i.e., on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011, the day I arrived in Bhubaneswar. My meeting with her took place the following day, i.e., on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011. Incidentally, the govt. of Orissa was informed of my visit well in advance.

Citing another example which serves to undermine the position of the Commissioner, she informed me that although under the relevant provision of the Act, she is the ex-officio member of the SCC, this is not properly reflected in the relevant record; and whenever a meeting of the said Committee happens, only a copy is marked to her.

My attention was also drawn to the fact that most of the officials handling disability related matters were quite new as a separate Directorate for the Welfare of Disabled Persons became operational only as late as in May this year.

It is indeed unfortunate that one of the most important functions of the SCPD vide Section 62 of the Act in respect of redressal of complaints/grievances has got under way only recently after the full-time incumbent Commissioner has taken over. Therefore, there has been a continuous non-compliance of Section 62. Likewise, similar non-compliance continues to happen in respect of Section 61 (d) requiring the commissioner to submit report on implementation of the said Act at specified intervals, and, also of Section 65 requiring the Commissioner to submit annual report as stated therein and also requiring the concerned state Govt. to place the commissioner's report before the state legislature as directed vide the said Section. The fact of the matter is that no annual report actually exists. It is therefore, desired that the SCPD should now demonstrate visible and positive proactivism in the matter of speedy disposal of complaints/grievances including in the matter of suo moto action wherever such suo moto action is called for. Another aspect to which the SCPD would do well to focus is in the area of building capacity of primary stakeholders and also of stakeholders of strategic importance. Capacity building programmes should be an ongoing process and not just a one-off event.

The information furnished to me by the state govt/SCPD is not only incomplete; but it conceals more than it reveals—a fact ascertained during the interactive sessions both with official and non-official stakeholders including persons with disabilities.

In the light of the foregoing, my sense is that now that some mechanism is in place in the form of SCPD and the directorate for the Welfare for disabled persons, work of effective and expeditious implementation of the Act must now begin in a concerted, coordinated and comprehensive manner, and not in a casual and desultory fashion as has so far been the case.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Ensure autonomy, dignity, and, independence of SCPD, among other things, by empowering her through adoption of a series of appropriate measures. Ensure also that the advisories/orders issued by SCPD to various departments are given due weightage and are complied with. Action to be initiated by the nodal ministry/department, in the instant case, by the Dept. of W and CD.

2. Put in place credible and comprehensive coordination and monitoring mechanisms which, among other things, may include designation by each relevant department a focal person on disability at various levels, periodic review by the SCPD of progress made by each relevant department in respect of fulfillment of its obligations under the PWD Act, submission of periodic returns by each relevant department as per format to be developed by the SCPD, surprise field visits, maintenance of data base by each relevant department of beneficiaries with disabilities and other activities, etc.. Action to be initiated and followed-up by SCPD.
3. Initiate and continue capacity building measures for Govt. officials, persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Action to be initiated by the SCPD and Dept. of W and CD.
4. Intensify measures to safeguard rights and facilities available for persons with disabilities. Action to be initiated and followed up jointly by SCPD and Dept. of W and CD.
5. SCPD must demonstrate visible and positive proactivism, among other things, by taking suo moto cognizance of violation/deprivation of rights of persons with disabilities. Action to be taken by SCPD.
6. Ensure compliance of Section 61 (d), and Section 65 of the Act in respect of preparation of report and tabling of annual report of SCPD as required by the Act before the state legislature. Action to be taken by SCPD and state Govt.
7. Make adequate budgetary provision for the office of the SCPD. Action to be initiated and followed up by Dept. of W and CD in active consultation with the SCPD.
8. Put in place required infrastructure and regular staff for the office of the SCPD. Action to be initiated and followed up by the Dept. of W and CD in consultation with the SCPD.
9. Declare SCPD or any official under her control and supervision as the Drawing and Disbursing officer.
10. SCPD may be given salary commensurate with her rank. Action to be initiated by the Dept. of W and CD.

### ***SCC and SEC***

There exists a State Coordination Committee (SCC) in the state of Orissa. The said Committee was constituted under Section 13 of the Act. This Committee, among other things, is to serve as a focal point on disability in the state. Besides, this Committee is also mandated to facilitate continuous evolution of comprehensive policy on disability (Section 18) in the state of Orissa.

Likewise, The State Executive Committee (SEC) constituted under Section 19 of the Act functions as the Executive Committee of the SCC and is mandated to carry out the decisions of the SCC.

Clearly, therefore, a great deal regarding implementation of the said Act depends on the effectiveness of these committees and also on how expeditiously they act. Unfortunately, these committees have not been meeting regularly at all regardless of what is mentioned in the information furnished to this Special Rapporteur by the Govt. of Orissa and the SCCPD of Orissa. This was revealed to me during interactions with officials and non-official stakeholders. The state Govt. has also failed to submit to this Special Rapporteur copies of minutes of these committees as required by the NHRC vide a format/questionnaire sent to the Govt. in advance.

It goes without saying that one of the most critical functions of the SCC is to facilitate continuous evolution of comprehensive policy on disability. I was told that a draft policy on disability was put together in the year 2007; and, the said draft policy continues to rest with the state Govt. for formal approval and adoption. It was also brought to my notice that the state Govt. did have a policy in place in the year 1996; but that policy needed to be revised in the light of the PWD Act and also in the light of India ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Moreover, it is also necessary to examine the composition of the SCC and the SEC in order to bring them in harmony with the relevant provisions of the Act. Especially, it is mandatory to allow representation to at least one woman with disabilities; and, one member from the SC or the ST communities.

### ***Recommendations***

1. Ensure that the SCC and the SEC meet at regular intervals as required by the relevant provisions of the Act. Action to be taken by the Dept. of W and CD.
2. Accord formal approval and adopt a revised and updated policy on disability without any further loss of time. Action to be taken by the state Govt.
3. Examine the composition of the SCC and the SEC in order to bring it in harmony with the relevant provisions of the Act. Also whether members nominated to the SCC under subsection (2) (f) and (h) of Section 13, and members nominated to the SEC under subsection (2) (e) of Section 19 of the Act have been replaced at the expiration of every three years as required by the relevant provisions of the Act. Action to be taken by the state Govt. with initiative by the Dept. of W and CD.

### **Part three: Thematic Areas:**

#### **Education**

The education related provisions Sections (26-31) as envisaged in the Act leaves much to be desired.

It deserves mention that the Act provides for free education to every child with disabilities in an appropriate environment up to the age of eighteen years. The performance of the state, I am afraid, both on the special education front as well as on the integrated/inclusive education front is a matter of very serious concern.

The efforts, so far, in the state have been casual and non-serious.

There exist only four special Govt. schools in the state. Seeking a reference to Section 26 ©, the state Govt. must promote setting up of special schools in such a way that children with disabilities living in different parts of the country are able to access them. The very fact that not a single special school has been set up after the Act came into force is a sad commentary on the performance of the state. What is even worse is that the existing special schools are also in dire straits. I was told by one of the non-official stakeholders that all the sanctioned posts in one of those four special schools are lying unfilled/vacant. Dearth of assistive devices and equipment, paucity of accessible books, including Braille and talking books, etc.. were also cited as areas of huge concern. Besides, there exists no special schools for children with some more vulnerable categories of disabilities, such as, for children with cerebral palsy, etc.. The state Govt. however, does extend grants-in-aid to some special institutions run by some voluntary organizations.

The scenario is no better on the integrated/inclusive education front. Section 26 (b) of the Act also enjoins it upon the Govt. to promote integration of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools. My interactions with a range of stakeholders leave me utterly convinced that "appropriate environment" for students with disabilities is missing from the mainstream schools, among other things, for want of compliance with accessibility standards, paucity of accessible books, teaching-learning materials, assistive devices, and adequate number of properly trained special educators. It was suggested by some non-official stakeholders that the special educators should at least be treated at par with other teachers; and, that every primary school should have at least one special educator. Presently, the number of special educators is abysmally low making a mockery of education.

A voluntary organization, namely, Social Work Research (SWRC) based in Orissa emailed to me certain recommendations in respect of education which I am enclosing together with this report with the submission that these recommendations may be looked into with the seriousness that they merit.

It would also be in the fitness of things on my part to emphatically underscore the urgent need to launch special drive to promote education of girls and women with disabilities.

Some other suggestions which figured during my various interactive sessions included the need for setting up of disability study and research centres, in various universities, initiation of coaching classes by Govt. for persons with disabilities to

prepare them for competitive state administrative service examinations etc.. on lines of similar initiatives for SC and ST communities.

Non-official stakeholders also expressed concern over what they called appointments of some teachers with fake disability certificates.

### ***Recommendations***

Following are some illustrative recommendations on which the Dept. of Education, Dept. of W and CD, and, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan must act upon.

1. Set up and promote special schools for children with different categories of disabilities and provide appropriate environment and facilities in such schools. This must be done in pursuance of the mandate of Section 26 © of the Act. Also modernize the existing special schools.
2. Create appropriate and accessible environment in the so-called mainstream schools and appoint adequate number of properly trained special educators with salaries commensurate with other teachers.
3. Provide books and teaching learning material to students with disabilities studying both in special set-up as well as in mainstream schools. Also provide for their uniform and transportation facilities and need based assistive devices.
4. Fill up with immediate effect the unfilled/vacant posts in all the four special schools; and, guard against any person with a fake disability certificate getting recruited.
5. Set up a computerised Braille press and a talking book studio for children with visual disabilities.
6. Launch special drive for the education of girls and women with disabilities.
7. Set up coaching centres for persons with disabilities aspiring for a career in the Orissa Administrative Services on lines of similar initiative for SC and ST communities.
8. Start professional and technical courses for the benefit of persons with disabilities.
9. Focus on the education of more vulnerable categories of disabilities, such as, children with intellectual disabilities, children with cerebral palsy, etc..
10. Pay greater attention to the educational needs of children with speech and hearing impairment.
11. Expand, streamline and modernize teachers training programmes for teaching students with disabilities; and, also add comprehensive input in the syllabii of mainstream teachers training programmes on disability.
12. Constitute a thematic group on education to oversee implementation of education related provisions in the Act. This group should have representatives of the departments of Education, W and CD, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and also of persons with disabilities, etc..

### *Employment/poverty alleviation*

“Pathetic” is perhaps is an appropriate expression that can be used to suitably describe the state Govt’s performance in relation to the provisions regarding employment and coverage of persons with disabilities under the poverty alleviation schemes. (kindly refer to Sections 32-41) of the Act.

Section 32 of the Act talks about identification of posts and their periodic updation in all categories of jobs for persons with disabilities. Following points may be noted with meticulous care in the context of identification in relation to the state of Orissa:

- A. Identification of posts across all categories was done years after the Act came into force resulting in colossal injustice to persons with disabilities.
- B. The said identification of posts was done by a committee comprising only bureaucrats and no persons with disabilities and other disability experts were part of such committee; or for that matter, of such identification exercise.
- C. The result was that only 12 posts in grade 1 and 54 posts in grade 2 were identified; and, the rest of the identified posts belong to grade 3 and grade 4 categories.
- D. Persons with disabilities were entitled to the benefit of three percent reservation in grade 3 and grade 4 jobs through executive/govt. order even before the Act came into force. However, the Act mandates three percent reservation for persons belonging to some specified categories of disabilities across all grades. Even the pre-Act list was never revised or updated.
- E. The list of identified jobs which was willy-nilly and haphazardly put together has also never been revised and updated even once.

Evidently, therefore, it is abundantly clear that the provision of reservation envisaged in Section 33 of the Act is not getting implemented with any semblance of seriousness. The SCCPD, in her written response to the NHRC questionnaire has explicitly stated that the Govt. of Orissa does not maintain roster for the purpose nor does it have or keep any account of backlog of vacancies. She further stated that even the relevant orders of the Chief Secretary of the state are not respected. It is therefore no wonder that the Govt. orders in relation to a special drive for recruitment of persons with disabilities have been brazenly ignored. To my mind, all this is a clear defiance of the relevant provisions of the Act.

Moreover, orders pursuant to Section 47 under the chapter on non-discrimination must be issued forthwith. Briefly speaking, this Section relates to explicit ban on reducing a person in rank or terminating her/his service if she/he acquires disability in the course of service. It also explicitly bans denial of promotion on ground of disability. Similarly, it is important to implement forthwith provisions of Section 38 which, among other things, also talks about providing non-disabling environment in workplaces so that persons with disabilities are able to work to the optimal level of their potential.

Since representation of women with disabilities in Govt. services is minimal, it is necessary to launch special drive for recruitment of women.

It was pointed out to me during the various interactive sessions that persons with disabilities have been the victims of gov’t’s policy to out-source work of certain posts

to external agencies as such agencies never employ persons with disabilities. Therefore, it was suggested that work of posts identified for persons with disabilities should not be out-sourced. Alternatively, it was also suggested that the govt. must issue specific and mandatory directive to these external agencies to employ persons with disabilities for work of posts which stand identified for persons with disabilities. It was further felt that there should be no ban in the matter of recruitment in relation to posts identified for persons with disabilities. A word of caution was also sounded in relation to some people getting recruited against posts reserved for persons with disabilities on the strength of fake certificates. Incentives should also be announced for private employers if five percent of their total work force comprises persons with disabilities as mandated by Section 41 of the Act.

Although Section 40 of the Act provides for reservation of not less than three percent quota for persons with disabilities, and although the state Govt. has directed the district collectors to implement this provision, primary stakeholders complained that the benefit of such schemes is not percolating down to the intended beneficiaries. There is no proper mechanism to monitor implementation of this provision. In many places, no job cards are issued to adults with disabilities under the MNREGA. This sorry situation must change and change fast.

***Recommendations:***

Action in respect of the following illustrative recommendations must be initiated by various departments of the state Govt. including the departments of W and CD, Personnel and Public Grievances, Labour and Employment, Industry, Rural Development, Panchayat ,etc..:

1. Identify posts as required by Section 32 of the Act across all grades of service without any further loss of time. Involve persons with disabilities and other experts/professionals, etc.. in the identification process. Ensure that the list to be so identified is revised and updated every three years as required by law.
2. Calculate backlog of vacancies with effect from the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 1996, i.e., the date of coming into force of this Act for the purpose of recruitment to backlog of vacancies.
3. Maintain a proper roster in proper form.
4. Fill up the backlog of vacancies within a specified time-frame.
5. Issue orders pursuant to Sections 47 and 38 of the Act as stated in the discussion above.
6. Launch a special drive for recruitment of women with disabilities with utmost seriousness.
7. Stop out-sourcing of work of posts identified and/or to be identified for persons with disabilities.
8. Issue necessary orders pursuant to Section 41 of the Act as stated in the discussion above.
9. Ensure that the benefit of poverty alleviation schemes, including the benefit of reservation of not less than three percent quota actually reaches the intended beneficiaries.

10. Adopt adequate safeguards to ensure that nobody is able to derive benefit meant for persons with disabilities on the basis of fake certificates.
11. Give due consideration to the written submissions of Shree Kakala Ananda, himself a person with a disability and also a member of State Coordination Committee constituted under the Act. The said submissions were addressed and sent to this special Rapporteur by him by Email. His submissions (contained in a small document) on what he calls points on violation of human rights of persons with disabilities in Orissa are enclosed along with this report. It deserves mention that Shree Akala Ananda had also raised these points in the SCC meeting with me; and, he has captioned them as Points on Violations of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Orissa.
12. Constitute an exclusive and high power group/committee in order to oversee the implementation of employment and poverty alleviation schemes related provisions of the Act. The said high power group/committee may, among others, include SCPD, officials of Dept. of W and CD, officials of other relevant departments, representatives of persons with disabilities, and professionals.

### *Affirmative Action/Accessibility/Social Security*

Provisions for affirmative actions essentially talk about making available to persons with disabilities assistive devices (Section 42) and also about preferential allotment of land at concessional rates in favour of persons with disabilities (Section 43) of the Act. Here too, the state govt. has cut a sorry figure. While there exists no scheme/programme/order for preferential allotment of land at concessional rates as stated above, the assistive devices scenario is also far below satisfactory.

The Act, vide chapter 8 under the caption non-discrimination enjoins it upon the govt. to provide barrier free access on road, in built environment such as, work places recreation centres, etc., and also in transportation. Although access audit of 54 Govt. buildings was conducted in Bhubaneswar, there remains a big question mark on the implementation of the relevant access audit reports. Besides, the need for making suitable amendments in the building byelaws was also highlighted during the interactive sessions I had with a range of stakeholders: As far as accessibility in transportation is concerned, the need for making bus services accessible was emphasized as it comes within the purview of the state Govt. Needless to state that air, train and shipment services come under the purview of the central Govt.

Moreover, provisions relating to social security (Sections 66-68) of the Act also need to be implemented. More particularly, a scheme for grant of unemployment allowance as provided for in Section 68 must be introduced forthwith.

### *Recommendations*

A number of Govt. departments, such as, departments of W and CD, Panchayat, rural development, land and revenue, Urban Development, etc.. must initiate action in respect of the following recommendations which as has been said elsewhere also, are, by far only illustrative in nature;

1. Launch a scheme for preferential allotment of land at concessional rates in favour of persons with disabilities as mandated under Section 43 of the Act.
2. Initiate a comprehensive scheme for providing assistive devices, aids and appliances, etc.. to persons with disabilities.
3. Bring about appropriate changes in the building byelaws incorporating accessibility standards and features, etc..
4. Ensure compliance of access audit reports wherever such access audit has been carried out.
5. Raise awareness on accessibility. Accessibility is not only about ramps. It has much larger connotations.
6. Make buses and bus services accessible to persons with disabilities.
7. Implement social security related provisions of the Act in general; and, unemployment allowance related provision in particular.

**Concluding remarks**

While comparisons are odious, I would wish to say that while the status of implementation of this Act across the country is far from satisfactory; Orissa's performance in respect of the matter has been very disappointing compared to the four other states which this Special Rapporteur had the occasion to review. Nevertheless, I am happy to acknowledge that things should now start picking up with the setting up of a separate directorate for the welfare of Disabled Persons and also the Commissionerate for persons with disabilities. I also see some silver lining following my interactions with the highly spirited incumbent Secretary, Department of W and CD.

I am also enclosing some documents with this main report, namely, the NHRC format/questionnaire, Orissa SCPD information for NHRC, Orissa Govt. information for NHRC, Orissa education related recommendations by SWRC, a voluntary organization, and Kakala Ananda's submissions on violation of human rights of persons with disabilities in Orissa. Incidentally, Shree Kakala Ananda happens to be a person with disability. He is also a member of the State Coordination Committee constituted under the relevant provision of the Act.

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## Recommendations relating to implementation of PWD Act in Odisha perspective

To,

The Special Rapporteur  
Disability National Human Rights Commission.

### Chapter 5 - Education

1. A computerized Braille Press need to be set up in Odisha within a month.
2. The special disable department needs to be set up in some of the state universities.
3. A special B.Ed Training Centre for the visually impaired (VI) persons needs to be established.
4. At least 1 special educator needs to be appointed in every government primary school.
5. Assistive technologies need to be available in all high schools and colleges, which are to be used by the students with disability.
6. While the normal girl students are being provided bicycles, the disable students need to be provided necessary equipments for the purpose of their easy access to their education.
7. The disable pension holder should not be denied to receive the Banishree Scholarship, because the disability pension is meant for the lively hood security and Banishree Scholarship is meant for the educational expenses.
8. The IEDSS Project needs to be monitored in regular interval and the TLM grand needs to be provided to every student with disability enrolled under the inclusive education and the special education.
9. All the special schools run by the W & CD department should be managed by the School and Mass Education department which looks after the education of the normal children of the state.

10. The existing vacancies in the Govt. High School of the Blind, Burla and Bhim Bhoi School for the Blind, Bhubaneswar need to be filled of through regular appointment and fair selecting process. The illegal appointments made under production of fake qualification certificate need to be monitored by high level committee of the Home & G.A. Department and the department proceedings need to be initiated in the event of finding of the corruption.
11. There should be the introduction of an universal scribe policy at both the class examinations i.e. joint entrance tests and the competitive examinations along with admissibility of necessary incentives for scribes in conformity with the UGC guidelines.
12. Without any discrimination preferential hostel accommodation needs to be provided to all the disable students in an out of turn priority basis and on the ground of distance cum merit basis.
13. As per the facilities provided to the SC and ST students, special coaching centers for the disable students also need to be established by the Govt. to prepare them for competitive examinations.
14. All the individual training institutions should have some special trades in which the disable students can be enrolled and can under go technical training as per their abilities and requirements.
15. The State Talking Book Centre needs to be made functional, because there is wastage of man power and government money in TCTVH due to it's disfunctionality.
16. The college library should facilitate Braille, large printed books and talking book sections. There should be also the provision of well equipped computer lab along with JAWS screen reading software, zoom ex instant reader, scanner, Braille printer and other assistive technologies with unlimited internet access to empower the disable students to pursue better higher education on par with the normal children.

## **POINTS ON VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN RELATION TO THE PWDS**

Perhaps Orissa is one of the leading state which declared many concessions and facilities for the PWDs in form of rules, regulations, circulars and G.Os. But it's a matter of regret that 80% of these rules and regulations are remained as publications without implementation. Everyday, everywhere the Govt. rules are violated due to which the PWDs are loosing their basic rights. Some of the examples are like this:

1. In the year 1978 Govt. of Orissa has made a provision to provide 3% reservation for the PWDs in all types of recruitments. In the year 1995 PWD Act ensured 3% reservation for the PWDs. But upto now even 1% PWDs could not be appointed in any establishment. In the year 2007 Commissioner-cum-Secretary, W & CD Department has instructed all the departments to fill up backlog posts of the PWDs. No department has responded against this instruction. By seeing the critical situation of the Departments the Chief Secretary, of Govt. of Orissa has ordered all the Secretaries to fill up the backlog posts in the year 2009. But none of the department has taken any step to fill up these backlog posts upto now. Due to which the PWDs are loosing their legit met rights and remaining unemployed. This is the clear cut example of violation of Govt. of India Act as well as Govt. of Orissa circulars including the Chief Secretary's order.
2. Govt. is formulating such type of schemes by which PWDs are forcibly remaining out of the schemes by violating the Govt. rules. Like, in the year 2010 many Sikhya Sahayaka posts have declared for appointment in which 75% posts are earmarked for science students and remaining 25% posts are reserved for arts and commerce students in which by calculation we came to know that a number of 670 posts are reserved for PWDs from science stream and 180 posts are reserved for arts stream PWDs. If we look into the scenario of Orissa we will find that more than 4000 PWDs have completed their +2 education from arts and commerce stream and only 80-100 PWDs from science stream have completed their +2 education. In spite of knowing all these things Govt. is remaining silent in this matter and the 3% quota for PWDs could not be filled up in the appointment of Sikhya Sahayaka.
3. Everyday the PWDs are harassing by the beurocrates and loosing their basic needs, like, recently 15 days back in the appointment of Sikhya Sahayaka in Ganjam District for some persons vocational course is counted as science stream and for others it is counted as arts stream, for which the people having 65% marks have appointed as Sikhya Sahayaka whereas the PWDs having 70% marks are remaining out of the appointment process.

4. Though 3% reservation is meant for admission of PWDs in all educational institutions still many colleges are refusing to give admission to the PWDs.
5. Though Govt. has made provision to give posting the PWD employees in their nearest places still the PWDs are employed in the remote areas which are not at all disabled friendly.
6. Govt. has made provision to give concession both in private and Govt. buses to the PWDs who are traveling by bus but it's a matter of regret that though the scheme is declared since long till today it could not be implemented. No private bus is giving concession to the PWDs even many Govt. buses are not giving concession to the PWDs.
7. Govt. is giving Rs. 200/- per month as pension under Madhubabu pension scheme for their social security. In spite of several requests the amount of pension is not increasing. Perhaps Orissa is the only state where Rs. 200/- is providing to the PWDs whereas Goa is giving Rs. 1500/-, Tamilnadu and U.P. is giving Rs. 900/- and our neighbouring states like A.P., West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal including Chattisgarh are giving much more than this. Now the question is, is this amount of pension is capable to preserve the social security of the PWDs? if not what about the poor helpless and neglected PWDs ?
8. The food security of the PWDs is in a measurable condition. In spite of regular demands from all corners of the state the Govt. could not able to provide Rs. 2/- rice to the poor and helpless PWDs of Orissa who are in distressed condition.
9. The land distribution system to the landless people is such that a single disabled person could not able to get free land under Basundhara Yojana.
10. No special provision is meant for the PWDs to include them in NREGS.
11. When people are taking the shelter of the court of law it is also not accessible for the PWDs.
12. Though the State Commissioner for PWDs is appointed to help the PWDs the commission itself is in disabled condition. Nobody is cared to the instructions of the commission. After sending of several orders the departments are not at all responding even they are not giving their replies against the orders of the commission.

13. A clear cut Govt. circular is there for spending 3% of the total funds of all Poverty Alleviation Schemes for the welfare of the PWDs but no where it is implemented upto now.
14. After 16 years of the enactment of the PWD Act 1995, 50% to 60% Govt. Offices couldn't be made accessible due to which a number of problems created in mainstreaming the PWDs.
15. Though the Govt. has declared many schemes but the Govt. Officials couldn't able to understand them how to implement properly. Many times they are misinterpreting the Govt. circulars by which the PWDs are facing the problems. For example many B.D.O.s are denying to give Banisree Scholarship & Madhubabu Pension Yojana to the same person by saying that a single person is not eligible to get double benefit though they are giving both Pension & IAY house, Pension & Rs. 2/- rice, IAY house & Rs. 2/- rice, Scholarship & Aids & Appliances etc.
16. Insufficient salary to the Govt. servants who are working for the PWDs. In every Block three BRTs (Block Resource Teacher), in every two Panchayats one IE Volunteers have appointed to provide qualitative education to the children with special needs. But the BRTs and the IE Volunteers are struggling for themselves. Though Govt. of India has approved Rs. 10, 000/- & Rs. 3, 000/- as the salary for BRTs and IE Volunteers still Govt. is paying Rs. 6, 000/- and Rs. 2, 500/- as the salary of BRTs and IE Volunteers. Within this stipulated salary can anybody expect qualitative education from the persons who are struggling for their own existence. When Govt. of India is providing more salary why the state Govt. pays much less than the approved budget?
17. Lack of incentives to the children with special needs for encouraging for schooling. In Orissa a disabled scholarship scheme named as Banishree is available since long. But due to the negative attitude of the Govt. servants the children with special needs couldn't avail this scholarship. For example a leading NGO of Orissa called Swabhiman have conducted a detailed survey for 60 children and found that only three disabled children are receiving this scholarship. From this one can easily imagine how the Govt. benefits are reached to the beneficiaries.
18. Lack of special schools for severe locomotor and for C.P. children. One will surprise by seeing the situation that in a big state like Orissa a single special school for severe locomotor and for C.P. children is not available.

19. Among some lakhs of general schools non of the school is having disable friendly toilets.
20. No reservation for the PWDs in the appointment of Orissa Administrative Service and PWDs are not eligible for these posts. Again one percent reservation is given to the PWDs in the appointment of Orissa Judicial Service which are all examples of the violation of PWD Act 1995.
21. No reservation is available for the PWDs in contractual appointments and out resouccing appointment.

1. Date of inception of the office of the Commissioner (for persons with disabilities) in your state. - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010
2. Name of the present incumbent / Commissioner. - Kasturi Mohapatra
3. Is she/he holding full-time and independent charge? If yes, what is the duration of such independent charge? - Yes, for a period of three years
4. Year-wise total number of complaints received during the last two years under the relevant provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of right, and Full Participation) Act 1995 (PWD Act). - 26 in 2009 and 132 in 2010  
272 in 2011  
Total number of cases - 430
5. Year-wise details of total number of complaints disposed of during the last two years. - 15 in 2009 and 26 in 2010  
26 in 2011  
Total disposal - 67
6. Procedure followed in respect of complaints/grievances. -
  - Provision of section 63 of PWD Act are being followed strictly. The grievances of the complainant are classified and alleged injustice are being communicated to the Respondents along with the copy of the complaint petition to show cause. After receipt of the so cause and supporting documents the copies of those are communicated to the complainant for objections and hearing.
7. Year-wise details of cases/instances - In the year 2010, 10 cases were

where suo motu cognizance was taken during the last two years in respect of deprivation of rights suffered by persons with disabilities.

8. As required under the relevant provisions of the PWD Act, what procedures/methods are followed for monitoring disbursement and utilization of funds on disability by various departments? Are these methods/procedures satisfactory? Any suggestions/ideas for further improvement?

9. Furnish annual reports of last two years. Have these annual reports been tabled before the concerned State Legislature as mandated by the PWD Act?

10. Has the Office of the commissioner undertaken, from time to time, capacity building and awareness raising measures in respect of the PWD Act amongst the primary stakeholders and other stakeholders, and also among the general

taken up suo motu, mainly from reports in the print and electronic media and during the inspection of different Government offices. For instance, sexual harassment of an adolescent hearing impaired in Dhenkanal, marketing of Blue CD of an adolescent mentally challenged girl etc.

Establishment of the office has taken the major portion of the time. No monitoring at the state level has been done. The details of disbursement and utilization shall be collected from the concerned Departments of the State Government shortly. District level monitoring is quite satisfactory. The mechanism for the monitoring disbursement and utilisation of funds is in the process of finalization.

Office of SCPD started functioning from April 2010. Annual Report for 2010-11 is under preparation and will be submitted before the Orissa Legislative Assembly by the end of this month.

Yes, the Office of the Commissioner has undertaken capacity building and awareness raising measures in respect of PWD Act by holding seminars at State, Regional and Districts

public?

11. Does the office of the Commissioner hold mobile courts in different places in the state, from time to time, to ensure expeditious disposal of complaints/ grievance? If yes, how many mobile courts have been held so far? Please specify the total number of persons with disabilities who attended such mobile courts given disability and gender-wise breakup. Also furnish details of number of complaints received and disposed of on the spot during the course of such mobile courts.
12. How many persons have faced action as result of decisions by the Commissioner for violation of rights of persons with disabilities?
13. Please cite some landmark decisions by the Commissioner? If necessary, enclose a separate sheet of paper containing details.

levels for capacity building of the primary stakeholders of the Government offices.

- - Seven mobile courts were held at Sonepur, Bolangir, Koraput, Puri, Nabarangpur, Chhatrapur and Cuttack for the purpose of expeditious hearing of the cases.
  - Total number of persons with disability attended the mobile Courts.....400
  - Number of complaints received...90
  - Number of complaints disposed of....30
- Only orders and suggestions are given to take follow up action as per the existing provision of the Act.
- The example of some Landmark judgements:
  1. Mamatarani Sahoo, a visually challenged girl, has been continuously applying for the post of Sikshya Sahayak for the District of Puri and was being continuously and deliberately ignored for over 6 years. After the intervention of the SCPD through mobile court, she has been appointed as Sikhya Sahayak in Nagapur Nodal Primary

School which is her native place.

2. The authority of the East Coast Railway had promised to make a special ticket booking counter for the PWDs at the Bhubaneswar Railway Station. They have started this counter on receipt of an order of the SCPD to that effect.
3. Pradosh Swain, a person with low vision, was denied by OPSC to take the help of a scribe for writing in the entrance examination for lectureship. On the recommendation of the Commissioner, OPSC made necessary modification and allowed the use of scribe enabling Pradosh to finally qualify for the post of lectureship.

14. Is the budgetary allocation for the office of Commissioner adequate? What is the additional requirement?

Budgetary allocation of Rs.59.28 lakhs for the year 2010-11 was not adequate. Procedural matters and the non-appointment of full time Government functionary did not allow for the expenditure. Total annual requirement is .....

15. Is the staff strength of the office of the Commissioner satisfactory? What is the existing staff strength?

The staff strength of office of SCPD is not adequate. The existing staff strength is indicated at Annexure-A

16. How do you rate the status of implementation of the PWD Act in your state : A. average; B. good; C. very good; and D. excellent. - Good
17. Do the state coordination committee and the State executive committee constituted under the PWD Act meet at regular intervals to transact its statutory business? Please furnish the minutes of last three meetings of both these committees. - Yes. The Co-ordination Committee and State Executive Committee have been constituted (copies enclosed) and meet regularly. Last meeting of the State Co-ordination Committee was held during October, 2010. State Executive Committee met on 25.04.2011 during 2011-12.
18. Does your state have a state policy on disability in place? - State policy for the PWDs 1996 has been amended and a new draft policy has been prepared in the year 2006.
19. Narrate the steps taken by the State Government to implement provisions relating to education as envisaged in the PWD Act. -
- Free school education is being given to children with disability through 116 special schools. Out of which 61 schools are being run with GOI aid and 4 schools are maintained by School & Mass Education Department of Government of Orissa.
  - 51 schools have been given grant-in-aid for maintenance and salary of teachers and staffs out of State fund.
  - Teachers are being paid as per ORSP Rule 2008.
  - State has provided NOC for 30 B.Ed. Colleges for Special B.Ed. in different districts.
  - State has provided NOC for 5 BOT/BPT Colleges.
  - State has also provided NOC for four MPT Colleges.
  - 5 VTCs providing education/training in different trades to PwDs for self employment. State provides

grants for maintenance, stipends and honorarium for the teaching and non teaching staff.

- State is providing grants to State Employment mission to train on different trades for PwDs.
- State also providing grants for Training Centre for Teachers for Visual Handicapped (TCTVH). The centre is residential and State is providing maintenance grants.
- 7 No.s of VTCs are running under DDRS Scheme.
- State is also taking steps for opening of Special ITI for PwDs at Barang.
- In 2010-11, 1453 sets of Braille Books have been provided from Class-I – VII and distributed in different districts.
- There are special training centre for the teachers in the field of B.Ed in special education and diploma in special education(cerebral palsy, mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment) are being conducted in the state of Orissa to fulfill the requirements of the special educators.
- Special identification camps were organized under the Sarva Sikshya Aviyon to identify different categories of children with disabilities in all the districts of Odisha. Three nos. of Block Resource

Teachers followed by the inclusive education volunteers have been recruited in each of the 314 block of Odisha to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities.

20. Narrate the measures adopted by the State Govt. to implement provisions relating to employment as envisaged in the PWD Act. What is the status relating to backlog of vacancies? Is the provision to all categories of jobs? Has the identification of posts for persons with disabilities done? If yes, is the list of posts so identified reviewed and updated in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 32 of the PWD Act?

In respect of employment of the persons with disabilities a total no. 603 of posts identified by the expert committee constituted by the General Administration Dept. Group A-12, Group B-54 Group C-422 Group D-115

Backlog vacancies are not calculated in the Govt. Depts. Roster register has not been maintained.

Ignoring the Govt. direction such as the chief Secretary's directives for holding special recruitment drive has been almost completely ignored.

Only one special employment exchange at BBSR is functional in Odisha with 11,980 registered. 16 persons have been employed through this exchange.

21. Narrate the measures adopted by the State Govt. to implement provisions relating to Barrier free access / accessibility as envisaged in the relevant sections of the

An access audit committee has been formed by the State Govt. to make review the accessibility features of all the public buildings of the State. Access

PWD Act.

audit of 54 office buildings and public places of Bhubaneswar have been completed. But no remedial measures have been undertaken.

Sarva Sikshya Aviyan allocates special fund for installation of ramps, handrails & special toilets in the primary / upper primary schools. But in effect, none of them are exerted as per the norm.

Building by laws needs to be amended by the Urban Development Department keeping the barrier free access for PwDs.

22. Enumerate the steps taken by the State Govt. relating to the implementation of three percent reservation quota in poverty alleviation schemes as envisaged in the PWD Act.
- Panchyatraj Dept. , Govt. of Odisha has instructed to all the Dist. Collector to ensure 3% reservation for persons with disabilities in all the poverty alleviation schemes lunched by both the Central & State Govt.
23. What is the status implementation of provision relating to preferential allotment of land at concessional rates as envisaged in the relevant section of the PWD Act in your state
- No scheme of preferential allotment of land is available at present.
24. Specify measure that have been taken by the State Govt. to implement provisions in respect of prevention and early detection.
- Supplementary nutrition program covering children from 6 months to 6 years.  
Immunization of infants against the six preventable diseases.  
Referral services for sick and malnourished.  
Training of AWWs and health functionaries at all health centres on early detection and intervention.  
SSA and WCD also conducted early identification

camps/surveys in all the districts of Odisha

25. Comment on the status of implementation of social security related provisions in your state as specified in the PWD Act.

- The Govt. of Odisha provide disability pension at rate of Rs.200/ per month per beneficiary to the persons with disabilities under the Madhubabu Pension yojana. 2,07368 beneficiaries have been covered till date. But the scheme of unemployment allowance has not yet been formulated by the State Govt.

26. Please list out the difficulties and hindering factors encountered by the Commissioner in the discharge of his functions / duties.

- Lack of full time Govt. official is hindering the procedural implementation. Due to outsourcing of the staffs we are not getting qualitative staffs to discharge the day to day official business. Some of the Departments are continuously not responding the letters even after the several reminders of the Commissioner. There is no mechanism for monitoring of disbursement and utilization of funds sanction by WCD Dept., Govt. of Odisha in respect different development projects in the field of disability welfare. The appellate medical Board has not yet been constituted to scrutinize the cases of fake certificates.

27. Enumerate the best practices followed by the office of the Commissioner.

- Office of the commissioner has constituted a Board of Advisor of

the field experts to take the opinion as and when required. The Commissioner has reviewed all the existing employment related circular of the State Govt. and made certain recommendations for a fair and equitable employment policy. Commissioner has ordered the implementation of the Govt. order for exemption of all fees charged by the Govt. colleges and Universities to students Colleges like the BJB Jr. College, Revenshaw Jr. College., Mahanga Govt. College, etc. have implemented the order of the Commission in its true sprit and have refunded the amount of fees charged.

28. Any suggestions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the office of the Commissioner?

Appointment adequate no. of regular & full time staff. Allocation of funds as per the actual requirement. Facilities of an autonomous authority. Making gazette notification to empower the Commissioner in respect of monitoring, disbursement & utilization of funds.

29. Any other relevance information?

State Govt. have provided Rs. 2.00 Crore for construction of Working Womens Hostel for differently abled women.

State Government have decided to provide each Disabled Persons 10 kg of rice @ Rs. 2.00/- irrespective of income criteria.

A new scheme "Bhima Bhoi Bhinnakhyama Abhiyan" is also going to be implemented from 2011 for early identification, aids and appliances, Scholarship for sons/daughters of PwDs, Free uniforms at a total outlay of Rs. 40.00 crore per annum.

34 No.s of Motorised Tricycles have been provided by the Govt. to Orthopedically Handicapped Persons.

In the office of the commissioner for persons with disability a toll-free number for help line has been installed. The Central Govt. has been moved for the four digit number for easier accessibility. Computerisation of help line is to be commenced soon.

Format:

Prepare a comprehensive note/presentation on the functioning of the office of Commissioner (persons with disabilities) in your state listing out its major achievements, failures, best practices, difficulties faced and suggestions for improvement in its efficiency and effectiveness. The note/presentation should, inter alia, include the following

1. Date of inception of the office of Commissioner (persons with disabilities) in your state.
2. Name of the present incumbent/Commissioner.
3. Is she/he holding full-time and independent charge? If yes, what is the duration of such independent charge?
4. Year-wise total number of complaints received during the last two years under the relevant provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, protection of rights, and Full Participation) Act 1995 (PWD Act).
5. Year-wise details of total number of complaints disposed of during the last two years.
6. Procedure followed in respect of complaints/grievances.
7. Year-wise details of cases/instances where suo motto cognizance was taken during the last two years in respect of deprivation of rights suffered by persons with disabilities.
8. As required under the relevant provisions of the PWD Act, what procedures/methods are followed for monitoring disbursement and utilization of funds on disability by various departments? Are these methods/procedures satisfactory? Any suggestions/ideas for further improvement?
9. Furnish annual reports of last two years. Have these annual reports been tabled before the concerned State Legislature as mandated by the PWD Act? :
10. Has the office of the Commissioner undertaken, from time to time, capacity building and awareness raising measures in respect of the PWD Act amongst the primary stakeholders and other stakeholders, and also among the general public?
11. Does the office of the Commissioner hold mobile courts in different places in the state, from time to time, to ensure expeditious disposal of complaints/grievances? If yes, how many mobile courts have been held so far? Please specify the total number of persons with disabilities who attended such mobile courts giving disability and gender-wise breakup. Also furnish details of number of complaints received and disposed of on the spot during the course of such mobile courts.
12. How many persons have faced action as a result of decisions by the Commissioner for violation of rights of persons with disabilities?
13. Please cite some landmark decisions by the Commissioner? If necessary, enclose a separate sheet of paper containing details.
14. Is the budgetary allocation for the office of Commissioner adequate? What is the additional requirement?
15. Is the staff strength of the office of the Commissioner satisfactory? What is the existing staff strength?

16. How do you rate the overall status of implementation of the PWD Act in your state: A. average; B. good; C. very good; and, D. excellent.
17. Do the state coordination committee and the state executive committee constituted under the PWD Act meet at regular intervals to transact its statutory business? Please furnish the minutes of last three meetings of both these committees.
18. Does the your state have a state policy on disability in place?
19. Narrate the steps taken by the state Govt. to implement provisions relating to education as envisaged in the PWD Act.
20. Narrate the measures adopted by the state Govt. to implement provisions relating to employment as envisaged in the PWD Act. What is the status relating to backlog of vacancies? Is the provision in respect of reservation under Sec. 33 of the PWD Act implemented in relation to all categories of jobs? Has the identification of posts for persons with disabilities done? If yes, is the list of posts so identified reviewed and updated in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 32 of the PWD Act?
21. narrate the measures adopted by the state Govt. to implement provisions relating to Barrier free access/accessibility as envisaged in the relevant sections of the PWD Act.
22. Enumerate the steps taken by the state Govt. relating to the implementation of three percent reservation quota in poverty alleviation schemes as envisaged in the PWD Act.
23. What is the status of implementation of provision relating to preferential allotment of land at concessional rates as envisaged in the relevant section of the PWD Act in your state?
24. Specify measures that have been taken by the state Govt. to implement provisions in respect of prevention and early detection.
25. Comment on the status of implementation of social security related provisions in your state as specified in the PWD Act.
26. Please list out the difficulties and hindering factors encountered by the commissioner in the discharge of his functions/duties.
27. Inumerate the best practices followed by the office of the Commissioner.
28. Any suggestions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the office of the Commissioner?
29. Any other relevant information?