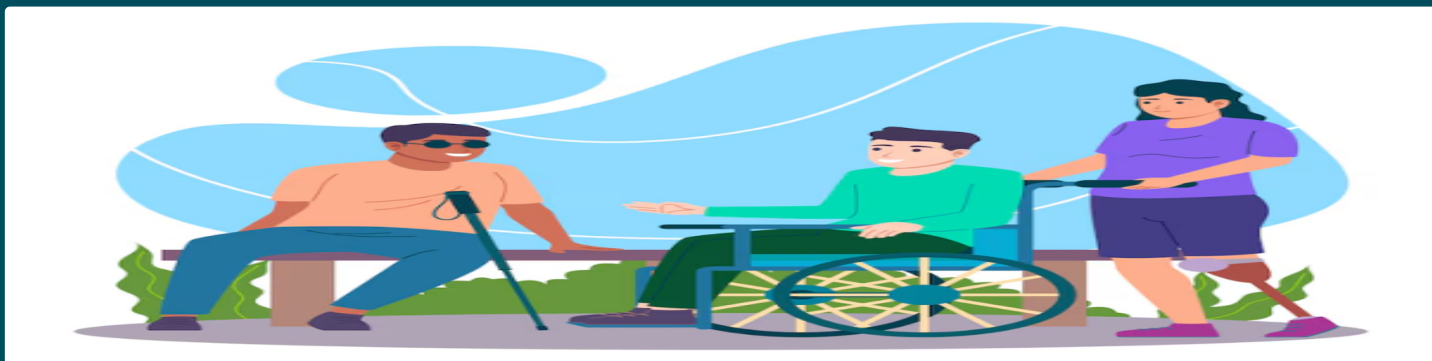




CIVIL

Goa Government Launches Support Scheme for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities Requiring High Support

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The Government of Goa has introduced a comprehensive support scheme titled “Scheme for Persons with Benchmark Disability Requiring High Support,” aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals with significant disabilities. This initiative, notified under the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, seeks to provide financial assistance and support for the independent living and well-being of beneficiaries. The scheme, published in the Official Gazette on May 15, 2025, is a significant step towards promoting economic self-reliance among persons with disabilities.

The scheme is notified under the powers conferred by the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. This Act aims to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities and ensure their full participation in society. The scheme is designed to provide financial assistance to persons with benchmark disabilities requiring high support, as defined under Section 38 of the Act.

To be eligible for financial assistance under this scheme, applicants must meet specific criteria. They must be bona fide residents of Goa by birth, marriage, or through continuous domicile of at least 15 years. Applicants must also have a benchmark disability requiring high support, certified by a competent authority. Additionally, they must belong to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category as per the Government of India or State Government's notified criteria and not be receiving similar financial assistance from other sources for the same purpose.

The financial assistance provided under the scheme includes a one-time payment of ₹40,000 (Rupees forty thousand only). This amount must be utilized exclusively for assistive technologies, personal care assistance services, and educational or vocational training support. Beneficiaries are required to submit proof of utilization, such as receipts or invoices, within 90 days of receiving the financial assistance.

Applications for financial assistance must be submitted to the Director, Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in the prescribed format. The application must be accompanied by several documents, including a certificate of benchmark disability, UDID card, EWS certificate, residence certificate, self-declaration of proper utilization, bank passbook copy, and consent to provide proof of fund utilization within 90 days.

The scheme includes several terms and conditions to ensure proper implementation and utilization of funds. The grant of financial assistance cannot be claimed as a matter of right and can be availed once every five years, subject to reassessment of eligibility. The Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities will be the sanctioning authority, and its decision regarding the selection or rejection of an application shall be final. Any false declaration will lead to cancellation and recovery of the financial assistance.

The financial assistance will be cancelled or withdrawn if the information furnished by the applicant is found to be incorrect or incomplete, or if the assistance has been obtained by suppressing any material facts. Assistance will also be cancelled if the applicant fails to submit proof of utilization within the prescribed timeframe. Funds will be recovered if found to be misused or used for purposes other than those specified in the scheme.

The Department will conduct periodic audits to ensure proper utilization of funds. Beneficiaries may be required to participate in the audit process by providing necessary documentation. In cases of misuse or non-compliance, the Department may disqualify the beneficiary from future assistance under the scheme.

The Director shall be the final authority concerning the interpretation of this scheme. The Government may amend or relax any of the provisions of this scheme for valid and sufficient reasons, including inflation adjustments for financial assistance.

This scheme reflects the Government of Goa's commitment to supporting persons with disabilities and ensuring their economic self-reliance and well-being. By providing financial assistance and ensuring proper utilization of funds, the scheme aims to enhance the quality of life for beneficiaries and promote their inclusion in society. The initiative is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for persons with disabilities in Goa.

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