

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2284
ANSWERED ON 09.08.2023**

ASSISTANCE TO PWD STUDENTS

2284 **PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA:**

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) mechanisms in place in Central Universities to provide assistance to PwD students;
- (b) whether the teaching methodology in Central Universities accommodate the needs of PwD students, if so, details of major support systems thereof;
- (c) the process for handling complaints/grievances for ill-treatment of PwD students in Central Universities and number of complaints received during last five years, year-wise; and
- (d) whether the Central Universities ranking in India are assessed for their accessibility towards PwDs, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUBHAS SARKAR)

(a) Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced various initiatives to facilitate persons with disabilities for equal participation and inclusion in Central Universities (CUs). UGC has notified Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Educational Institutions and Universities. Central Universities have adopted various mechanisms for assisting PwD students such as:

1. Differently-abled friendly buildings and facilities in the Universities,
2. Braille inscriptions,
3. University of Delhi has set up the Equal Opportunity Cell to provide assistance to students with Disabilities,
4. The University of Delhi has also set up the Center for Disability Studies,
5. Universities have been instructed to implement the prescribed provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016,
6. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has set up a dedicated unit (physical space) in the ground floor for the PwDs enabled with 20 terminals with scanners and headphones. These machines are equipped with software like (JAWS, KURZWIEL) to enable students to access online resources and OPAC.

7. JNU library provides the digital copies of print reading material to the visually challenged students. The unit is air conditioned and open 24x7. For online access of Indic language reading material, the library has provided software (Kibo) for language students of JNU.
8. Central Sanskrit University, Delhi with its Headquarters office at New Delhi and its 12 campuses located at different parts of the country, have ramps, lifts, tactile pavings, wheelchairs and accessible toilets etc. for PwD students,
9. CU Kerala has established a 'Centre for the Specially Abled' for mobility related support and hardware and software support to the specially-abled students, staff and teachers.
10. In Pondicherry University, PwD students are exempted from payment of all fees, including examination fees. 5% of seats in each course are reserved for differently abled candidates. Those differently abled candidates who have passed the qualifying examination are eligible to apply for PG admission irrespective of the percentage of marks obtained in the qualifying examination except otherwise specified. Relaxation in terms of marks in admission and fee is also provided by few other Universities like Central University of Tamilnadu and Aligarh Muslim University,
11. Special provision for financial assistance in the form of Reader Allowance, Scribe Charges,
12. 5% reservation in admissions for students with benchmark disabilities as per the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016,
13. Disability cell has been constituted in the BHU to safeguard the interest of Divyang Students.

(b) Central Universities have adopted various pedagogical tools and technological interventions such as electronic worksheets, phonetic spelling software, talking calculators, JAWS software, braille scripts, audio books, talking books for PwD students. .

(c) UGC vide its Redressal of Grievances of Students Regulations, 2023, has directed CUs to establish Students Grievance Redressal Committee and appoint Ombudsperson. Central Universities being statutory, autonomous bodies created under Acts of Parliament, have been instructed to address the complaints from PwD students, as and when arising, as per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Education and UGC from time to time.

(d) In National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation, special weightage is given to accessibility for the PwD persons.
