

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2295
ANSWERED ON 09.08.2023

Education centres for visual, speech and hearing impaired students

2295 Shri P. Wilson:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether education centres for visual, speech and hearing impaired students have been closed due to lack of funds, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether teachers are being trained to impart education on online classes, to specially abled students, if so, how are they being trained; and
- (c) whether Government has any data on how many specially-abled students dropped out of schools due to lack of funds in the last five years, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (c) The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 advocates full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of education to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system. The Samagra Shiksha scheme has been aligned with the NEP 2020 to ensure that all children have access to quality education. The Ministry of Education is implementing the Samagra Shiksha – an integrated scheme for School Education, under which children with special needs from Pre-Primary to Class XII, as per Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 are covered. There are 5533 special schools (All Management) for Children with Special Needs in the country.

Under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, financial assistance is provided to States and UTs for undertaking various activities to reduce number of Out of School Children (OoSC) including opening/strengthening of new schools upto senior secondary level, construction of school buildings & additional classrooms, setting up, up-gradation and running of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas, free uniforms, free text books, transport allowance and undertaking enrolment & retention drives. Further, special training for age appropriate admission of out of school children and residential as well as non-residential training for older children, seasonal hostels / residential camps, special training centres at worksites, transport/ escort facility are also supported to bring out of school children to the formal schooling system. In addition, under the student oriented component for

the children with special needs, financial assistance is provided for identification and assessment, aids and appliances, braille kits and books, appropriate teaching learning material and stipend to girl students with disability etc.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has proactively taken many initiatives to promote the accessibility of education such as: **PRASHAST** - A Disability Screening Checklist for Schools - a mobile app that covers the 21 disabilities, including the benchmark disabilities as per the RPwD Act 2016, has been developed for early screening and identification of children with disabilities at the school level. **Barkhaa Series** is a supplementary 'Graded Reading Series' formulated with the objective of enabling children to develop reading skills during the early years, as a pedagogic tool aimed at helping the children of Classes I and II in learning to read with meaning and to arouse in them the urge to read more and more. **Teaching Learning Resources in Indian Sign Language** - This initiative realizes and promotes inclusion of students with Hearing Impairment in mainstream education. More than 935 Universal Design of Learning (UDL) based textbook videos, prepared by NCERT are available on DIKSHA along with 10,500 ISL dictionary words. **Audio Books** - The textbook is available in e Pub talking book format which can be read through Text to Speech (TTS) app and also in audio format, using drama and sound of animals, picture description etc. are developed with the aim to enhance accessibility for Children with Visual Impairment (CwVI) and also for realizing the need of anytime and anywhere access. **PMeVIDYA** - Under PM eVidya, 12 DTH channels (one class, one channel) initiative many live programs are broadcast daily to facilitate students' learning through leveraging the ICT solutions. One of the live series is "Teaching Learning Interventions for Inclusive Classrooms". Each episode is of half an hour duration with a mandatory ISL interpreter. More than 594 episodes worth 297 hours broadcast time are available as archive on NCERT official YouTube channel.

There is a dedicated National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) Module, on CwSN component, which is compulsory for all the teachers undergoing NISHTHA training. The teachers are being trained to impart education in inclusive classrooms as part of NISHTHA online training. The beneficiaries of NISHTHA are as follows:

NISHTHA Elementary (Face to Face) - 1773312
NISHTHA Elementary (Online) - 2264539
NISHTHA Secondary (Online) - 749352
NISHTHA (Foundational Literacy & Numeracy) (Online) - 1297621
NISHTHA Early Childhood Care and Education (Online) - Ongoing - 26594 (Till 11th July 2023)

In addition to NISHTHA, a live session series titled Teaching Learning Implementation for Inclusive Classrooms, is telecast from 12:00 noon to 12:30 pm through PM eVidya.
