

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1457
ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

Standardized assessment tools for children with learning disabilities

1457. Dr. Fauzia Khan:

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

- (a) whether Government recognizes the need for standardized assessment tools for children with learning disabilities;
- (b) if so, the measures being taken to develop culturally relevant tools and early screening methods for the multilingual Indian context;
- (c) whether Government is planning a national policy on learning disabilities to standardize identification and intervention processes;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) steps being taken to integrate clinical psychologists and screening programmes into local community and district schools and hospital settings for early identification and support and
- (f) the measures taken to train and sensitize educators, parents and community workers to support children with learning disabilities?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) & (b) The Government recognizes the need for standardized tools for assessment of children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) as defined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016. To this end, culturally relevant assessment tools including NIMHANS SLD Battery (NSB) and Grade Level Assessment Device (GLAD) have been developed for younger children by national institutes/ institutes of national importance under the GoI such as National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) and National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID). Standardized assessment tools for children in Standards K-12 and separately for adults with SLD are at advanced stages of development in NIEPID.

Further, with a view to monitor CwSN and facilitate early screening and intervention, the Government through NCERT has developed 'PRASHAST' (Pre-Assessment Holistic Screening Tool); a mobile app to digitally screen students for possible disabilities at school

level. It is available in 23 languages (English and 22 languages included in the VIII Schedule of our constitution) for easy access by teachers, special educators and school heads. PRASHAST has been divided into 2 parts. PRASHAST Part-1 is for the use of regular teachers for first level preliminary screening of all the students class wise. PRASHAST Part-2 is for the use by special educators for validating the observations of PRASHAST Part-I, including questions specific to assessment and identification of children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs). Till date about 10 lakh plus users such as Head of school, teachers and special educators from government and government aided schools have registered, with more than 61.57 lakh screening being conducted since launch of the app in September 2022. The Checklist under the App helps in early screening of CwSN, who are then taken for assessment and certification of the disability, which enables the schools to provide customized learning interventions such as individualized education plan, therapy, learning assistance, flexible curriculum and assessment through special educators depending on the type and level of disability.

(c) to (f) The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 gives special emphasis on promoting equitable and inclusive education for all, including children with SLD, and is in complete consonance with the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 and endorses all its recommendations with regard to school education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN). The Policy recognizes the importance of creating enabling mechanisms for providing CwSN, the same opportunities of obtaining quality education as any other child. It also emphasizes early screening, identification, intervention, and support for mainstreaming CwSN.

Besides, there is a dedicated component for Inclusive Education of CwSN under Samagra Shiksha, under the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE) for the school education sector which is in alignment with NEP 2020 and the RPwD Act 2016. Through Samagra Shiksha, continuous professional development programs are conducted for teachers, educators, and awareness and sensitization programs for parents to build awareness and skills for supporting CwSN including SLD. A five-day capacity building programme, developed by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), for Training of Trainers to deliver inclusive education was organized by NCERT- NISHTHA in 2023-24, to sensitize and train teachers and other functionaries of inclusive schools to address the learning needs of CwSN. Online Teacher Training module for NISHTHA Elementary, NISHTHA Secondary and NISHTHA Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) have been developed by NCERT to sensitize general teachers on managing inclusive classrooms, being mindful of the learning requirements of CwSN. Nearly 60 lakh teachers have trained on these modules, additionally online training on Accessible Digital Resources and Assistive Technologies have been conducted covering more than 15,000 teachers. Further, the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) for pre-service teacher education, implemented by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), has two credits dedicated for inclusive education for children with special needs to ensure inclusion and equal participation of CwSN in regular schooling process and adapt teaching-learning processes to meet the unique learning needs of CwSN, including children with learning disabilities.

Besides above, following measures have been taken by various Ministries/Departments and Autonomous bodies of GoI to improve assessment, identification and education of CwSN including SLD:

- Central Board of Secondary Education conducts teacher training on inclusive education practices for the teachers of the affiliated schools. A Handbook of Inclusive Education for Teachers comprising ways to adapt curriculum, teaching strategies, and alternative assessment methods for CwSN has been developed. CBSE have made provisions such as extra time during examinations, the use of assistive technology, and the provision of scribes for CwSN as per the RPwD Act, 2016.
- University Grants Commission (UGC) under the Ministry of Education (MoE) has framed and circulated guidelines entitled “Credit Based Course on Pedagogical Aspects for Teaching Divyangjan and Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs)” to all Universities/HEIs for the benefit of students with SLDs.
- Department of Higher Education (DHE) implements the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP) for improving teaching effectiveness of faculty of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). One of its components is Capacity Building Program for SLDs focusing on enhancing institutional capacity to support students with SLDs while strengthening faculty expertise across five key HEI departments: Admissions, Student Life, Academic Affairs, IT, and Career & Placement.
- NCTE has introduced Accessibility Guidelines for Teacher Education Institutions creating awareness on developing accessible environments/system related to Teacher Education. These comprehensive guidelines include aspects related to Accessibility of Infrastructure, Accessibility of Content and Training of teachers.
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), in March, 2024, notified the guidelines for the purpose of assessing the extent of specified disabilities including SLD in a person after having considered the recommendations of the sub-committees of experts to assess the extent of specified disabilities in a person.
- DEPwD in collaboration with DoSEL is implementing Scheme of Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP Scheme) in convergence with Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for distribution of Aids/Appliances to CwSN including SLDs. Under this scheme, activity funds are shared between DEPwD and the DoSEL in the ratio of 60:40 wherein assessment/distribution of Aids/Appliances is undertaken through Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) across the country in coordination with State SSA Authorities.
- NIEPID under DEPwD prepares psychologists by conducting M.Phil programme in rehabilitation psychology, who can then conduct screening programmes for early identification of intellectual disabilities. These courses are also to be extended through NIEPID Regional Centres to create a talent pool of psychologists to work in different setups. NIEPID also conducts outreach programmes/camps/ CRE programs on regular basis to train and sensitize educators, parents and community workers to support children with learning disabilities.

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (M/oH&FW) implements the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) which aims at early screening and intervention to improve the overall quality of life of children with special needs. This program involves screening of children from birth to 18 years of age for 4 Ds- Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies and Development delays, spanning 32 common health conditions for early detection and free treatment and management, including surgeries at tertiary level. Children diagnosed with identified selected health conditions are provided early intervention services and follow-up care services at the district level.
