

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3274
ANSWERED ON 16.12.2024

Education of Children with Disabilities

3274. Shri Raja A:

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

- (a) the details of steps taken under various schemes for implementation for the education to children with disabilities (CwD) in the country;
- (b) the measures taken by the Government for improvement of school infrastructure including funding for updating school infrastructure to make it inclusive/disability-friendly;
- (c) whether any survey conducted to know the percentage of retention of CwD children in various schools in the country, State-wise, since many such children drop out because of lack of disability-friendly infrastructure, including washrooms in schools;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the procedure being followed by the Government to monitor the retention of CwD in different schools?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) The Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education has launched Samagra Shiksha Scheme, an overarching programme for the school education sector. There is a dedicated component of Inclusive Education under Samagra Shiksha for the education of Children with Special Needs (CwSN). It covers all CwSN with one or more disabilities as mentioned in the schedule of disabilities of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. Through this component, CwSN are provided support via specific student-oriented interventions such as identification and assessment camps, provision of aids, appliances and assistive devices, transportation, scribe and escort allowance support, Braille books and large print books, stipend for girls with special needs and teaching-learning materials etc. in order to appropriately address their unique educational requirements in general schools. Further, individualized support is also provided through therapeutic interventions at the block level.

Samagra Shiksha scheme has provisions for creation of differently-abled friendly infrastructure such as Ramps, Ramps with Handrails, and CwSN friendly toilets for barrier free access to schools for all children. As per UDISE+ 2021-22, there are 10,69,795 schools having ramps, 7,40,395 schools having ramps with handrails and 4,01,487 schools with CwSN friendly toilets for CwSN across the country. An amount of Rs.239.16 lakh for Ramps and Rs.8962.07 lakh for disabled friendly toilets has been approved through the PAB for the year 2024-25.

Further, Government has notified the Accessibility Code for Educational Institutions on January 10th, 2024 and the same has been notified in the Rules of RPwD Act 2016 on 20th June, 2024. The Code examines the physical barriers and information & communication barriers of access to school facilities for CwSN. It provides child friendly standards with cost effective solutions for existing buildings, along with elements to make new buildings compliant with national accessibility standards.

In addition, Government is taking numerous initiatives for the education of CwSN which include:

- (i) A dedicated channel for the hearing impaired has been launched under PM e-Vidya initiative on 6th December, 2024. The PM e-Vidya 24*7 DTH Channel No.31 telecasts learning content in Indian Sign Language (ISL) for the benefit of the hearing impaired.
- (ii) NCERT textbooks are being converted into ISL, glossary words in psychology, history, geography, economics have been produced and are being continually disseminated through DIKSHA portal and PM e-Vidya DTH TV Channels, on regular basis to ensure coherent access of these e-Contents. A 10,500 words ISL dictionary developed in collaboration with ISLRTC uploaded on DIKSHA.
- (iii) National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conducts *live interaction series, titled, "Teaching Learning Interventions for Inclusive Classrooms"*. Each episode is of half hour duration, focusing on promoting inclusive pedagogy practices, by considering one class, one subject and one-chapter from textbooks, with mandatory ISL interpreter.
- (iv) To promote and support inclusive education for all, NIOS has been working with the philosophy of reaching the unreached and pursuing various proactive measures. Learning materials such as Talking Books for learners with blindness and low vision, a subject-specific terminological dictionary in Indian Sign Language, and learning materials in video format in Indian Sign Language for deaf and hard of hearing learners. These are available on YouTube channel of NIOS and Gyanamrit.
- (v) NIOS is the first board in the country to offer ISL as a first language subject to deaf learners. The use of sign language as a subject (first language) will enable easy knowledge acquisition and comprehension. Provision of 'On-Demand Examinations' that give the learners a scope to appear in particular subjects' examinations as per their convenience.
- (vi) NIOS provides 'Examination at Home' that institutes exceptional case to case provision of conducting examinations at home for severely disabled learners. Such flexibility brings in reasonable exemptions during examinations that provide general and specific provisions for learners with a disability.
- (vii) Several exemptions/concessions are provided to CwSN such as facility of Scribe and compensatory time, appointment of Scribe and related instructions, fee and special exemptions like exemption from third language, flexibility in choosing subjects, alternate questions /Separate Question etc.
- (viii) Under the Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS), financial assistance is provided to the voluntary Organisations for running various projects for the welfare/empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) including Special School for the Children with Visual, Hearing and Intellectual disability including children with Cerebral Palsy etc., aimed at enabling them to maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or social functional levels.
- (ix) Financial assistance for tuition fee reimbursement to 100% Deaf (without cochlear implant) and 100% Blind students enrolled in Classes 9 to 12 for pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects is being provided through National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres under the DEPwD. The extent of financial assistance is limited to Rs. 1.5 Lakh per student or actual whichever is less.

With a view to monitor CwD 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. Till date about 10 lakh plus users have registered on the App. The Checklist under the App helps in the early screening of children with disabilities, who are then taken for assessment and certification of the disability, which enables the schools to provide individualized education plan/ therapy/ learning assistance through special educators depending on the type and level of disability.
