

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

LOK SABHA

Unstarred Question No.1170

To be answered on 11.02.2025

Braille Literacy

1170: DR. HEMANT VISHNU SAVARA;
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Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of plans to integrate Braille into mainstream educational institutions for children with visual disabilities;
- (b) the details of important initiatives for the Empowerment of visually impaired persons;
- (c) the details of plans to increase the Braille Literacy in India; and
- (d) the details of number of people benefited through different initiatives for visually impaired persons?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B.L. VERMA)

(a) National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), Dehradun, under the administrative control of DEPwD, is dedicated to supporting individuals with visual disabilities, with a primary objective of providing education and training. As part of this initiative, a Universal Design Centre for Reading is being established in collaboration with the National Book Trust to promote the use of Braille in educational materials and train educators to incorporate Braille into their teaching methodologies. Additionally, the institute conducts awareness programs and teacher training sessions to enhance the capacity of mainstream educational institutions in supporting students with visual impairments.

(b) to (d) The Government has undertaken several initiatives for the empowerment of visually impaired persons:

- I. **The Financial Support for Development of Accessible Learning Materials (DALM Project)** (formerly the Braille Press Project) under the **Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA)** provides accessible learning materials free of cost. Since its inception in 2014, **1,63,390 students** have received free school textbooks and other learning materials in accessible formats. The objectives of the DALM Project include:
 - i. Providing financial support as a **Recurring Grant-in-Aid** to approved implementing agencies for offering free-of-cost Accessible Learning Materials to school-going children with visual impairment and students with visual impairment pursuing higher education. The accessible formats include Braille textbooks, Talking Books, E-Pubs/Digital Books, and Large Print Books.

- ii. Providing financial support as **Non-Recurring Grant-in-Aid** for:
 - a) Establishing new **Braille Presses** and modernizing existing Braille Presses.
 - b) Capacity augmentation and modernization of **existing Talking Book Studios**.
 - c) Setting up new **Digital Book Production Centres** and upgrading existing ones.
 - d) Establishing new **Large Print Production Centres** and modernizing existing ones.
- II. Under the **Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP) Scheme**, Braille script equipment is provided to visually impaired individuals for their education and rehabilitation. In the last three years, **50,457 visually impaired persons** have benefited.
- III. The **National Action Plan for Skill Development of PwDs** aims to provide vocational training and improve employability. To facilitate its implementation, the **PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal** was launched in September 2023. Since its launch:
 - **157 visually impaired persons** and **29 persons with low vision** have completed skill training.
 - Currently, **144 visually impaired persons** and **10 persons with low vision** are undergoing skill training.
- IV. The **DEPwD issued guidelines on 08.11.2024** regarding the identification and reservation of posts for persons with benchmark disabilities (PwBDs), including those with visual impairments, in central government establishments.
- V. To further enhance Braille literacy in India, the following measures have been initiated:
 - Establishment of **Assistive Technology Rooms** and training facilities to promote Braille education.
 - Conducting **short-term specialized training programs** for students and teachers to enhance Braille literacy.
 - Raising awareness about **Braille literacy among educational institutions** and conducting job fairs in collaboration with companies to facilitate job placements for visually impaired individuals.
 - Offering **skill development programs** in various fields such as Data Entry, Assistive Technology, Computer Programming, Coping Skills for Work & Social Life, and Braille Shorthand (Hindi), ensuring proficiency in Braille-related skills.
 - NIEPVD released a '**Manual on Bharati Braille**' on **November 26, 2024**, serving as a comprehensive guide for enhancing understanding and practical application of Bharati Braille in educational and professional settings.
 - On **January 4, 2025**, the **DEPwD and NIEPVD released 'A Standard Bharati Braille Code'**, further standardizing Braille usage across India.
 - Braille teaching is a core component of the **Special Education (VI) programs**, school education, and various skill development courses, benefiting about **566 students** across different levels of education and training.
