

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

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3959**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25/03/2025

**NATIONAL ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY INITIATIVE**

3959. Shri Naveen Jindal:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether steps have been taken to increase the number of libraries under the National Accessible Library Initiative, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the total number of libraries established or upgraded for Braille accessibility during the last three years, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken measures to increase the production of books in Braille, and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any steps have been taken to expand the linguistic range of Braille literature under the Braille Production Initiative; and
- (e) the timeline and future targets for expanding Braille libraries and multilingual literature for visually impaired readers?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B. L. VERMA)

**(a)** : The Government has implemented significant measures to expand the number of libraries under the National Accessible Library Initiative, ensuring that visually impaired individuals have access to learning materials in various accessible formats. Currently, 16 libraries are empanelled with Sugamya Pustakalaya, a digital repository of accessible books. The National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) has partnered with the DAISY Forum of India (DFI) to facilitate this online repository for persons with visual disabilities.

To further enhance accessibility, NIEPVD has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with several leading universities and institutions, including Vardhman Mahaveer Open University(Kota, Rajasthan), Subhas Open University (Kolkata), Uttarakhand Open University, and Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE), University For Teacher Education Gandhinagar (Gujarat State University of Teacher Education). These partnerships aim to develop accessible book collections in their respective libraries for individuals with visual impairments.

In collaboration with National Book Trust (NBT), New Delhi, NIEPVD has established a Universal Design Centre for Reading in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. This center showcases NBT's extensive collection of accessible publications for visually impaired persons. Additionally, NIEPVD has partnered with NAB, Delhi, to create Shraavan, an IVR-based audio library for the visually impaired.

To raise awareness and increase the number of accessible libraries, NIEPVD Dehradun regularly organizes seminars and conferences involving government, semi-government, college, university, and NGO stakeholders. These ongoing efforts demonstrate the government's commitment to improving access to literature and educational resources for visually impaired individuals across India.

**(b):** The National Accessible Library (NAL) plays a vital role in increasing institutional membership across India, thereby enhancing access to inclusive reading resources. During the last 3 years, the number of institutional memberships has reached 18, covering the following States/UTs: *West Bengal-07, Maharashtra-03, Uttar Pradesh-01, Mizoram -01, Punjab-01, Haryana-01, Kerala-02, Uttarakhand-01 and Jammu Kashmir- 01*).

**(c), (d) & (e):** The Government is providing free of cost Braille Text-Books, and educational materials in Braille format and other accessible formats (E-Pub, Talking Book, Large print) under "Project on Financial Support for Development of Accessible Learning Materials (DALM; erstwhile Braille Press Project)" through 25 implementing agencies spread all over the country. Since 2014, 13,68,01,098 Braille pages have been embossed and distributed to students with visual impairment under the DALM project.

Furthermore, to expand the linguistic range of Braille literature, the Standard Bharati Braille Codes mapped with Unicode for 13 Indian languages has been published on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in collaboration with NIEPVD, Dehradun.

The Government is actively pursuing the expansion of Braille libraries and multilingual literature for visually impaired readers through initiatives such as:

- Increasing the number of digitally accessible libraries under the National Accessible Library Initiative.
- Enhancing the availability of books in Braille and other accessible formats across multiple Indian languages.
- Strengthening partnerships with organizations like the National Book Trust (NBT), Suganya Pustakalaya, and Daisy Forum of India to expand the scope of accessible literature.

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