

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 426
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2025

INITIATIVES FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF DIVYANGJANS

426. Shri Damodar Agrawal:
Shri Anurag Singh Thakur;
Shri Manoj Tiwari:
Shri Praveen Patel:
Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre:
Shri Vijay Baghel:
Shri P P Chaudhary:
Smt. Kriti Devi Debbarmann:
Dr. Nishikant Dubey:
Smt. Aparajita Sarangi:
Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap:
Ms Kangna Ranaut:
Shri Kali Charan Singh:
Smt. Smita Uday Wagh:
Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi:

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

- (a) the details of steps taken to ensure that Divyangjans in remote or underserved areas are informed about the 16 initiatives launched to empower the Divyangjans across India which aims to ensure accessibility and equal opportunities for Persons with Disabilities along with the number of beneficiaries;
- (b) the details of steps taken to involve the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations to create an inclusive environment for Persons with Disabilities in the country particularly rural & semi-urban areas like Jalgaon Lok Sabha constituency;
- (c) the details of measure to examine the long-term impact of these initiatives on the lives of Divyangjans in terms of empowerment and inclusion;

(d) whether any monitoring mechanism has been established to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on Divyangjans, if so, the steps taken to address gaps identified; and

(e) whether any dedicated helplines or assistance centers have been established to help Divyangjans access these initiatives, if so, the details thereof and number of persons assisted?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B.L. VERMA)

(a) The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024 with launch of 16 groundbreaking initiatives to empower Divyangjan across India. Through these initiatives, the Department aim to ensure equal opportunities, accessibility and empowerment for every Divyangjan. List of Initiatives launched is at **Annexure**.

Widespread awareness has been done through print, electronic, digital and social media platforms to ensure that Divyangjan across India including those in remote or underserved areas are informed about these initiatives.

(b) The chapter IX of the RPwD Act 2016 provides for registration of institutes like NGOs, etc. that are working for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. It further states that the appropriate Government may within the limits of their economic capacity and development, grant financial assistance to registered institutions to provide services and to implement the schemes and programmes across the country including rural & semi-urban areas like Jalgaon Lok Sabha constituency, in pursuance of the provisions of the said Act.

Most of the initiatives launched are in collaboration with private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations to create an inclusive environment for Persons with Disabilities in the country including Jalgaon Lok Sabha constituency. Such initiatives include launch of better aids and appliances for use of Divyangjan, MoUs with private companies to enhance employment opportunities for divyangjan, sharing codes for enhancing accessibility and Accessible Learning Materials etc.

(c) and (d) These 16 initiatives have been launched to ensure equal opportunities, accessibility and empowerment for every Divyangjan and to create an inclusive environment for Persons with Disabilities in the country. Periodic review and regular follow-ups with the stakeholders are done

by the Department for holistic improvement towards the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

To address identified gaps, Department is focused on strict policy implementation and enforcement, alongside strengthening monitoring mechanisms.

(e) Yes. The Department launched National Disability Information Helpline Service (NDIHS) on Short Code-14456 in January 2024. The helpline provides round-the-clock telephonic assistance in English and Hindi through an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and call attendant support during working hours.

NDIHS provides information about aids and assistive devices, Unique Disability ID (UDID) services, educational and economic empowerment programmes for persons with disabilities (PwDs), benefits, and concessions under Government schemes etc. Around 65,000 persons have been assisted through the helpline so far.

List of Initiatives launched on 3rd December, 2024

1. **Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan:** An online platform for empanelment of accessibility auditors for built environments was introduced, reflecting the government's commitment to creating inclusive infrastructure
2. **Sugamya Bharat Yatra:** A unique initiative in partnership with the Association for Persons with Disabilities, where Divyangjan will assess the accessibility of public spaces using the AI-enabled "Yes to Access" app.
3. **Pathways to Access – Part 3 Compendium:** The third installment of the series highlights key government documents on employment, financial services and healthcare for persons with disabilities, empowering them with knowledge and access to resources.
4. **High-Power Spectacles:** Developed by CSIR-CSIO, these glasses cater to individuals with low vision, offering superior optical clarity and improving quality of life.
5. **Divyasha E-Coffee Table Book:** ALIMCO's e-book, launched to commemorate its 50-year journey, showcases inspiring stories and achievements in providing assistive devices to Divyangjan.
6. **Kadam Knee Joint:** An indigenous innovation developed by IIT Madras and SBMT, offering enhanced mobility and durability, launched as a major leap in assistive technology.
7. **Awareness Generation and Publicity Portal:** A digital platform for seamless application under the Awareness Generation and Publicity Scheme was inaugurated to enhance transparency and efficiency.
8. **Accessible Storybooks:** In collaboration with NIEPVD and NBT, 21 accessible books in Braille, audio and large print formats were launched to promote inclusive education.
9. **Standard Bharti Braille Code:** A draft for standardized Braille scripts in 13 Indian languages was introduced for public consultation, ensuring consistency and compatibility with Unicode standards.
10. **Braille Books Portal:** An online submission portal for creating Braille books was unveiled, fostering inclusive education.
11. **MoU with Infosys BPM:** A significant partnership to enhance employment opportunities for Divyangjan through the PM DAKSH portal's Divyangjan Rozgar Setu initiative.
12. **Employability Skills Book:** Released in 11 Indian languages, this book bridges the gap between education and employment for Divyangjan, promoting economic independence.
13. **Infosys Springboard Skill Programme:** Infosys Springboard in collaboration with Yunikee offered courses to help deaf learners across India to develop skills across various fields and acquire marketable abilities.

14. **Google Extension for Persons with Hearing Impairment:** SignUp Media and Yunikee partnered to provide robust, reliable, accessible source of sign language communication in entertainment, information and educational media for the Deaf community in India in accessing entertainment and other video content.
15. **E-Sanidhya Portal:** Tata Power Community Development Trust and NIEPID, Secunderabad developed Tata E-Sanidhya Neuro-Diversity Platform as a specialized online and offline (digital) service designed to assist individuals with neuro-diversity conditions, particularly those affected by autism.
16. **Computer-Based Indian Intelligence Test by NIEPID, Secunderabad:** NIEPID has developed an indigenous Indian Test of Intelligence, with the key strengths in its cultural relevance and sensitivity. The data from 4,070 children across different parts of India ensures that the test represents the Indian population accurately.
