

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN EDUCATION FOR DIVYANGS

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The Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education has launched an overarching programme for the school education sector-Samagra Shiksha Scheme. The scheme aims to look at education of Children with special needs (CwSN) in a continuum from pre-school to class XII. The scheme 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.

There is a dedicated component of Inclusive Education under Samagra Shiksha for the education of CwSN. 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 also has provisions for creation of differently-abled friendly infrastructure such as ramps, ramps with handrails and differently-abled friendly toilets for barrier free access in schools.

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.

The Government has amended the Schedule to Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and notified the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) for Special Education Teachers in general schools with 10:1 PTR at primary level and 15:1 PTR at upper primary level.

In addition to above, Government also provides several exemptions/concessions 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.

Besides, teaching learning materials are easily available in accessible digital form for instance talking books in DAISY/ e-Pub for Learners with Blindness and Low Vision. Indian Sign Language (ISL) introduced as a language subject at Secondary level by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and also as a language subject to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners at Secondary level, study materials have been developed as videos in ISL format, one-hour live telecast in ISL thrice a week on PM e-Vidya TV Channel to disseminate awareness of ISL across the country.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is conducting a **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.

NCERT textbooks have been converted into ISL related to curricular content for classes I to VII, glossary words in psychology, history, geography, urdu, economics have been produced and are being continually disseminated through DIKSHA portal and PM eVidya DTH TV Channels, on regular basis to ensure coherent access of these e-Contents. A 10,500 words ISL dictionary uploaded on DIKSHA in collaboration with

ISLRTC.

Further, to improve the identification of CwSN, the Government has introduced the Prashast App for early screening and identification of CwSN in regular schools. Teacher capacity building programs are being undertaken under NISHTHA in hybrid mode to train general teachers to address the leaning needs of CwSN.

The information was given by the Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

SS/AK

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