GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1874
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2021

Inclusive ICT for people with disabilities

1874. SMT. VANDANA CHAVAN:

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

(a) whether all Government websites are accessible for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), as recommended the TRAI in 2018;

(b) whether Government plans to notify accessibility standards for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education under Section 40 of Rights for Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act; and

(c) the details of steps Government has taken to ensure accessibility in education through online classroom teaching and educational material for (PwDs) during COVID-19 pandemic?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SUSHRI PRATIMA BHOUMIK)

(a): Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has informed that all the Government websites are not accessible for Persons with Disabilities as recommended by TRAI in 2018. However, Government has taken several initiatives for making the government websites accessible for people with disabilities. In this regard, several projects have been taken up which are mentioned as below:

i. 95 Central Government Websites have been made accessible under Content Management Framework (CMF) Project.

ii. 590 Websites of State Government have been made accessible, under a project funded by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD).

iii. 628 Websites of Districts have been made accessible under S3WaaS (Secure, Scalable and Sugamya Web Site as a Service) framework.

(b): Accessible India Campaign (AIC), launched on 03.12.2015 as a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility, focuses on enhancing the accessibility of Built-Up Environment, Transportation System and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem to make the life of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) more convenient.

Section 40 of the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 states that the Central Government shall, in consultation with the Chief Commissioner, formulate rules for persons with disabilities laying down the standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems, and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas.

Ministry of Education is in the process of making Accessibility Standard in their domain, covering all aspects of accessibility in education including Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

(c): As informed by Ministry of Education, Education being in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools, colleges and university are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. The spread of COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on education as schools, universities and colleges closed their premises and states shut their borders in response to lockdown measures. This has interrupted the learning and led to disruption of education system in the country. The Central Government is constantly advising States/UTs through guidelines and meeting with respect to interventions for reducing impact of pandemic on education. The guidelines issued so far are as follows:

- PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education: https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf
- Guidelines for the development of e-content for Children with Special Needs (CWSN). https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/CWSN_E-Content_guidelines.pdf

Apart from all these, a comprehensive initiative called **PM eVIDYA** has been initiated as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan on 17th May, 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes:

- DIKSHA (one nation, one digital platform)is the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all gradesare available on it.
- One earmarked SwayamPrabha TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (one class, one channel).
- Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- ShikshaVani.
- Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.

CIET-NCERT has signed MoU with ISLRTC for development of Sign language videos. Till 29 July, 2021 about 543 videos have been recorded on NCERT curriculum from classes 1 to 5. These are being shared on DIKSHA and 180 textbook based ISL videos uploaded on DIKSHA and telecast on PM eVIDYA DTH TV channels.

NIOS has also started imparting daily 8 hours liveprogramme of 4 hours each on PM eVIDYA channels, for classes 10 and 12 for providing continued learning support for learners at Secondary and Senior Secondary level including Vocational Courses and Indian Sign Language-based content w.e.f. 01.09.2020. Till now, more than 370 live sessions are already broadcast for learners of Instill now, more than 1064 live sessions are already broadcast for learners of NIOS.

NIOS is using One DTH channel specifically for hearing impaired students in sign language. For visually and hearing-impaired students, study material has been developed in Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language; both are available on NIOS website/ YouTube.

82 sign language videos for CWSN are uploaded on DIKSHA portal by NIOS. One hour programme in sign language for secondary and senior secondary level content of NIOS are being broadcast on PM eVIDYA channel 10 from September 1, 2020.

NCERT has recorded 317 textbook chapters of different grades as audio books (1936 audio book chapters) and have uploaded on DIKSHA.

Course material in 20 subjects at secondary level and 5 subjects at senior secondary level are already uploaded on DIKSHA Portal by NIOS.

141 sign language videos for CWSN are uploaded on DIKSHA portal by NIOS.

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