

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**

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Promoting Technology for Disabled

Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri D.Napoleon informed Lok Sabha today in a written reply that under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment a number of initiatives have been taken to promote research & technology for Persons with Disabilities:

1. The Ministry confers National Awards for the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), every year, under various categories. One of these categories is for "Best applied research/innovation/product development aimed at improving the life of PwDs."

2. The Ministry made its website accessible to persons with disabilities and launched the accessible website in January, 2010, at a cost of Rs.20.09 lakh. Other Central Ministries were also requested to similarly make their own websites, as well as of their associated organizations, accessible to persons with disabilities.

State Governments have also been requested to make their important websites accessible to persons with disabilities and financial assistance has also been offered to them for doing so. Central assistance of Rs. 31.00 lakh has so far been released to 3 State/UT Governments for this purpose. No proposal, in this regard, has however been received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

The Government has also, in 2010, instituted a new category of National Awards - viz for websites with best accessibility features. Under this category one award each is given for such websites of (i) Government organizations, (ii) Public Sector/autonomous/local bodies, and (iii) Non-Govt. organizations.

3. An Online Braille Library, established by the National Institute for Visually Handicapped, (NIVH) Dehradun, has been launched on 4th January, 2012. This Library has books, including in Telugu, which can be accessed in real time from any location, including Andhra Pradesh. An amount of Rs. 47.50 lakh has been spent on this project so far.

An online catalogue of Braille books has also been hosted by NIVH which enables visually-impaired persons to ascertain the location and availability of a desired Braille book, without going to Braille Libraries and Braille Presses. An amount of Rs.17.00 lakhs has been spent on this project so far. NIVH has also launched an Online Directory of Services for the Visually Impaired persons. Services available in Andhra Pradesh have also been included in this Directory.

4. The National Institute for Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad, has developed certain technology based teaching modules for training of persons with mental retardation. Technological methods like electroencephalography (EEG) and electromyography (EMG) are used for assessment of disability. EEG bio-feedback is used for stimulation of electrical impulses in the brain of children with mental retardation, and softwares are used for speech therapy.

5. The National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata, has developed prototypes of myo-electric hand, multi-use wheelchair, low-cost pediatric below-knee prosthesis, and functional electric stimulation devices for persons with foot-drop.

6. The Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India, functioning under this Ministry, also works on developing technological aids and appliances at a relatively low cost.

7. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is running a TV channel called "Navshikhar" through which programmes on disability-related topics are telecast for the benefit of teachers/special educators, professionals, parents of children with disabilities, and other stakeholders. At present, there are 472 Direct Reception Centres for this channel, of which 32 are in Andhra Pradesh.
