

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1475

ANSWERED ON:04.03.2015

ACCESSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has conducted any assessment to see if Government websites meet international standards of web accessibility;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any measures have been taken to make the Government website disabled friendly and accessible;
- (d) the details, thereof; and
- (e) the details regarding the implementation of the National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility?

Answer

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b): The Guidelines for Indian Government websites (GIGW) have been adopted by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG). The GIGW accessibility guidelines are based on W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). These are internationally accepted guidelines on web accessibility and cover a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible.

The Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) has initiated the Website Quality Testing Project for testing and certifying the government websites. Under this project, testing of 1000 Government websites have been undertaken. Currently around 950 websites of various Ministries/Departments and attached offices have already been tested by Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) and test reports have been sent to the concerned Ministries/Departments for addressing the issues of non-compliance.

(c): Yes, Sir.

(d): The GIGW guidelines adhere to the requirements of persons with disabilities and ensure compliance with level A of Web content Accessibility Guidelines(WCAG) 2.0 as laid down by the World Wide Web Consortium(W3C). GIGW has incorporated all the relevant success criteria to make the websites accessible. Under the website quality testing project initiated by DeitY under which 1000 Government websites have been taken up for testing, adherence to these guidelines is also being assessed.

(e): The details of steps taken by Government towards implementation of the National Policy on Universal Electronic Accessibility are given as under:

Project proposals were invited from various Academic Institutes/ R&D Organizations for training, creating awareness and development of tools and technologies related to accessibility.

A High Level Advisory Committee (HLAC) was constituted with multiple stakeholders' participation to decide further course of action to implement the policy.

First meeting of HLAC to finalize action plan to implement the above policy was held on December 30, 2014 under the chairmanship of Secretary, DeitY.

HLAC decided that NIC will convert 100 most popular/visited inaccessible Government websites into accessible sites as per Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW). For the websites of remaining Government organizations, ERNET India and NICS will empanel various agencies, which can take up accessibility related projects of different Government Ministries/Departments. NICS has informed that they have already empanelled various agencies for the said purpose.

In addition, various other initiatives like providing logical CAPTCHA e.g. asking simple questions (e.g. add 2 and 3) and One Time Password (OTP) etc. in addition to Visual CAPTCHA, which is already in place and making Government notifications/circulars etc.

accessible through digital signature and putting them into ePub and OCR (Optical Character Recognition) based PDF, have also been initiated.

HLAC also decided that Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will organize trainings by leveraging existing Institutions and NGOs.