



न्यायालय मुख्य आयुक्त

COURT OF CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)

दिव्यांगजन सशक्तिकरण विभाग / Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्रालय / Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

भारत सरकार/ Government of India

Case No. CCPD/15355/1041/24

Dated: 17/08/2026

Case No. CCPD/15355/1041/2024

In the matter of —

Sh. Zameer Dhale

... Complainant

Versus

The Registrar,

University of Delhi

... Respondent No. 1

The Joint Secretary (Policy),

Department of Empowerment

of Persons with Disabilities,

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

... Respondent No. 2

The Director,

Campus of Open Learning (COL-DU),

University of Delhi

... Respondent No. 3

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1. Gist of the Case:

1.1 Mr. Zameer Dhale, a person with benchmark disability, filed the present complaint dated 09.05.2024 alleging non-payment of remuneration to tactile sign language interpreters engaged during his examinations by the School of Open Learning (SOL), University of Delhi, and the failure of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to respond to his representation dated 24.06.2023 seeking enhanced examination and educational accommodations for students with deafblindness.

1.2 The Complainant is a B.A. (Political Science) student of the School of Open Learning, University of Delhi (Roll No. 22-2-01-013769), enrolled during the academic sessions 2022-23 and 2023-24. He appeared in the Semester-I examinations held on 25.03.2023, 26.03.2023 and 02.04.2023, and the Semester-II examinations held on 16.12.2023, 13.01.2024, 20.01.2024, 27.01.2024 and 03.02.2024 at Sri Aurobindo College, New Delhi. He submitted that, due to the absence of institutional funding, he was compelled to rely on volunteer tactile sign language interpreters, as professional interpreters were not provided or remunerated by the University.

The Complainant further stated that he addressed a representation dated 24.06.2023 to the UGC seeking enhanced reasonable accommodation for students with deafblindness, including provision of both a tactile sign language interpreter and a scribe during examinations, payment of interpreter remuneration at a minimum rate of ₹500 per hour (including travel expenses), Braille study material, accessible ICT and online learning platforms, designation of a dedicated point of contact, and mandatory sensitisation programmes. Despite a reminder dated 31.03.2024 and discussions held with the Office of the Chief Commissioner on 27.03.2024 at JNU, no response was received from UGC.

The Complainant also contended that the DEPwD Office Memorandum No. 34-02/2015-DD-III dated 29.08.2018, circulated by UGC through Letter No. F.6-2/2013(SCT) dated January 2019, does not adequately address the specific accommodation requirements of persons with deafblindness. He alleged that the denial of appropriate accommodations violated his rights under Sections 3, 21 and 23 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

1.3 The Complainant prayed for directions to facilitate consideration of his representation by the Chairperson, UGC; revision of the DEPwD guidelines to specifically provide accommodations for persons with deafblindness, including dual assistance of a tactile sign language interpreter and scribe, remuneration for interpreters, Braille learning material, accessible ICT facilities, a designated point of contact, and sensitisation programmes; and for forwarding the matter to DEPwD for appropriate

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amendment of the existing guidelines to safeguard the rights of students with deafblindness.

2. Notice issued to the Respondents:

In exercise of the powers conferred under Sections 75 and 77 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), this Court issued a Notice dated 25.05.2024 to the above-mentioned Respondents, calling upon them to submit their comments on the complaint within the prescribed statutory period. The Notice was issued in respect of the alleged violation of the Complainant's rights under Sections 3, 21 and 23 of the Act.

3. Reply filed by the Respondents:

3.1 The University of Delhi submitted that the matter pertains specifically to the School of Open Learning (SOL) and the Campus of Open Learning. It stated that there is presently no specific policy governing examination accommodations for students with deafblindness. However, considering the Complainant's case as a special case, the University provided financial assistance in the form of a scholarship of ₹10,000 per semester, conveyance charges, and reimbursement of remuneration paid to tactile sign language interpreters upon submission of claims.

3.2 No reply was received from Respondent No. 2, the Joint Secretary (Policy), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), despite service of notice.

3.3 The School of Open Learning (SOL) confirmed the Complainant's enrolment and appearance in the examinations. It submitted that the existing UGC and DEPwD guidelines do not provide for the engagement of tactile sign language interpreters and only permit the provision of scribes for eligible candidates with blindness, specific learning disabilities and cerebral palsy. SOL stated that it has no separate budgetary provision for payment of tactile interpreters and suggested that the Complainant take up the matter with DEPwD for appropriate policy changes. It further submitted that reimbursement of the remuneration paid to tactile sign language interpreters was made to the

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Complainant as a special case.

4. Rejoinder filed by the Complainant:

4.1 Copies of the replies submitted by Respondents No. 1 and 3 were forwarded to the Complainant vide letter dated 09.07.2024, inviting him to file a rejoinder within 15 days. The Complainant submitted his rejoinder through email dated 03.09.2025, reiterating the challenges faced by students with deafblindness, highlighting delays in payment of remuneration to tactile sign language interpreters, raising concerns regarding implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), and seeking formulation of a comprehensive national policy providing appropriate educational and examination accommodations for students with deafblindness.

5. Hearing:

5.1 A hearing in the hybrid mode was conducted on 03.09.2025 wherein the following parties were present:

Sl. No.	Name & Designation of the Attendees (Smt./Shri)	On behalf of	Mode of Presence
1.	Prof. Bipin Tiwary	Respondent No.1	Online
2.	Mukesh Chand Meena, Assistant Registrar	Respondent No.3	Online
3.	Adv. Parv Garg	Respondent No.1	Online

6. Record of Proceedings:

6.1 During the hearing, the Complainant reiterated the difficulties faced by students with deafblindness, including the limited availability of tactile sign language interpreters, delays in reimbursement of interpreter remuneration, inadequate examination accommodations, and concerns

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arising from the implementation of the four-year undergraduate programme under the National Education Policy (NEP).

6.2 The School of Open Learning (SOL) submitted that it had reimbursed a total amount of ₹42,500 towards remuneration of tactile sign language interpreters in the Complainant's case. It further stated that no separate budgetary provision exists for such payments and that it continues to follow the existing UGC and DEPwD guidelines, which do not specifically provide for accommodations for persons with deafblindness.

6.3 The University of Delhi submitted that the absence of dedicated financial support from UGC limits its ability to institutionalise such accommodations and stated that any policy or funding mechanism for such facilities would require appropriate directions and financial support from the competent authorities.

7. Observation and Recommendations:

7.1 Upon consideration of the complaint, the replies filed by the Respondents, the rejoinder submitted by the Complainant, and the submissions made during the hearing, this Court observes that although the School of Open Learning (SOL) extended assistance to the Complainant by reimbursing the remuneration of tactile sign language interpreters, such support was provided only on an ad hoc basis in the absence of a structured institutional policy for students with deafblindness. The absence of a formal mechanism has resulted in recurring issues relating to the availability of tactile sign language interpreters and delays in reimbursement, thereby affecting effective access to inclusive education and reasonable accommodation envisaged under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

7.2 The Court further notes that concerns raised by the Complainant regarding implementation of the four-year undergraduate programme under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 require appropriate clarification and academic support to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at a disadvantage. The Court also notes that delays in reimbursement of interpreter remuneration adversely affect the availability of qualified interpreters for future examinations.

7.3 The submissions of the University of Delhi indicate that the absence of dedicated financial support and specific policy guidelines poses practical constraints in institutionalising accommodations for students with deafblindness. The Court is of the view that coordinated action by the University, UGC

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and DEPwD is necessary to establish a sustainable framework for such accommodations.

7.4 Accordingly, the School of Open Learning (SOL) is recommended to verify the Complainant's claim regarding any pending reimbursement of remuneration paid to tactile sign language interpreters and, if found admissible, release the payment within 30 days of receipt of the necessary supporting documents. An Action Taken Report shall thereafter be submitted to this Court.

7.5 The University of Delhi is further recommended to formulate, in consultation with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), an institutional policy for students with deafblindness within three months, incorporating appropriate provisions relating to tactile sign language interpreters, timely reimbursement mechanisms, accessible communication, and other reasonable accommodations.

7.6 The University is also advised to provide the Complainant with appropriate clarification regarding the implications of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and extend necessary academic support and reasonable flexibility, wherever feasible, to facilitate completion of the programme.

7.7 The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) is advised to examine the need for comprehensive national guidelines on educational accommodations for persons with deafblindness, and the University may take up the matter with the University Grants Commission (UGC) for creation of a dedicated funding mechanism to support such accommodations.

7.8 All the Respondents are recommended to submit an Action Taken Report to this Court within three months of receipt of this Order in terms of Section 76 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Failure to comply with the recommendations of this Court, without sufficient cause, may invite appropriate proceedings under the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, including action under Section 89 (punishment for contravention of provisions of the Act or rules made thereunder) and Section 93 (offences by companies or Government departments, as applicable), in accordance with law.

8. Accordingly, the case is disposed of.

Yours faithfully,

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**(S. Govindaraj)
Commissioner**

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