

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2429

ANSWERED ON 22ND MARCH, 2023

Infrastructure and quality of primary education in rural areas

2429 # **Shri Harbhajan Singh:**

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the ever widening socio-economic inequalities are adversely affecting the infrastructure and quality of primary education in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government proposes to implement the principle of equity in primary education in rural areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Ministry proposes to prepare an action plan to strengthen the infrastructure and quality of primary education in rural areas; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (d): The Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education is implementing Samagra Shiksha from 2018-19 to support States and UTs for ensuring inclusion and equity at all levels of school education. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The scheme reaches out to girls and children belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, minority communities and other disadvantaged groups. Under the scheme, provision has been made for giving preference to Special Focus Districts, Educationally Backward Blocks, Left Wing Extremism affected districts, and aspirational districts while planning interventions like setting up of primary schools, construction of additional classrooms, gender segregated toilets, drinking water facilities, etc.

Under the scheme, the States and UTs are supported for strengthening of existing government schools and for creation and augmentation of infrastructure facilities based on the gaps determined from Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) and proposals received from respective State/UT. The need for schools and also the infrastructural facilities in schools are worked out every year by the respective State/Union Territory on incremental basis depending on their need and priority and reflected in their Annual Work plan & Budget (AWP&B). These plans are then appraised and approved/estimated by the Project Approval Board (PAB) in the Department of School Education & Literacy in consultation with the States and UTs.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 provides right of free and compulsory elementary education to every child in the age group of six to fourteen years in a neighborhood school. As per the RTE Act, the appropriate Government and the local authority shall establish a school for primary classes (class I–V) within walking distance of one km of the neighborhood. The Government of India has launched Samagra Shiksha, which is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education. Samagra Shiksha supports States and UTs in implementation of the RTE Act, 2009.

(e) & (f): Samagra Shiksha focuses on improvement in quality of education by providing support for different interventions like in-service training of teachers and school heads, conduct of achievement surveys at state and national level, grants for library, sports and physical activities, support for Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, ICT and digital initiatives, School Leadership development programme, remedial teaching for academically weaker students, support for Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, etc.

Improving the quality of education across all levels from primary to university level is a continuous and ongoing process. National Education Policy, 2020 focuses on improving the quality of education through various measures such as introduction of new pedagogical and curricular structure, Early Childhood Care and Education, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and Transforming Assessment for Student Development, Experiential and Competency based Learning, etc. The integrated scheme of Samagra has also been aligned with NEP 2020.

In addition, in order to provide continuous professional development opportunities to the teachers at the elementary level, this Department launched the National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) online training programme using DIKSHA platform in October 2020.

Furthermore, the Government of India has been implementing a programme of sample based National Achievement Survey (NAS) aimed at classes III, V, VIII and X with a cycle period of three years. The last round of NAS was held on November 12, 2021 across India covering students of grades 3, 5, 8 and 10. The aim and objective of NAS is to evaluate children's progress and learning competencies as an indicator of the health of the education system, so as to take appropriate steps for remedial actions at different levels.

Besides, the following are some of the steps taken to improve infrastructure and the quality of primary education:-

- (i) National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) has been launched under Samagra Shiksha for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, and e-content for the same has been released on DIKSHA platform.
- (ii) The Structured Assessment for Analyzing Learning levels (SAFAL) framework has been developed by CBSE and launched for Competency-based assessment for grades 3, 5 and 8 focusing on core concepts, application based questions and higher-order thinking skills.
- (iii) VIDYA PRAVESH—Guidelines for Three-month Play-based School Preparation Module, has been released to ensure that all children are exposed to a warm and welcoming environment when they enter Grade-I.
- (iv) Further, the Department of School Education & Literacy has approved a project on Rejuvenation of Basic Infrastructure in approximately 1.20 lakh Government schools across the country with an overall budget estimate of Rs. 4590 crore under Samagra Shiksha scheme. The interventions covered under the project are major/minor repairs, functional toilets (boys/girls), electricity connections, functional drinking water facility and boundary walls.
