

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1168

ANSWERED ON- 10/12/2025

EDUCATIONAL GAP

1168 Dr. M. Dhanapal:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken initiative to bridge the educational gap, promote inclusive learning across urban, rural areas for equitable education access in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of Government's initiative, including programmes, infrastructure development, teaching training and policies to ensure equitable education access for all students nationwide; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (c): The Department of School Education and Literacy is implementing an Integrated Centrally Sponsored Scheme for School Education- Samagra Shiksha. The scheme treats school education holistically, without segmentation from pre-primary to class XII. The scheme has been aligned with National Education Policy, 2020 with aim to ensure that all children have access to qualitative and holistic education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment which should take care of their diverse background, multilingual needs, different academic abilities and make them active participants in the learning process.

Under Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to the States and UTs for opening/strengthening of new schools upto senior secondary level, construction of school

buildings & additional classrooms, development/strengthening of school infrastructure in northern border areas under Vibrant Village Programme, setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas, construction of hostels for PVTGs under PM-JANMAN ,construction of hostels under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for unsaturated ST population, strengthening of school infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, Toilets for Girls & Boys, Boundary Walls, Major Repairs, Drinking Water, Paintings on School Walls, Supply of Furniture etc.

Further, financial assistance is provided to States and UTs for implementation of various provisions of Samagra Shiksha Scheme including free uniform to eligible children at elementary level, free textbooks at elementary level, reimbursement under RTE Act, various qualitative components development of primers/textbooks for tribal language, teaching learning materials, transport/escort facility up to secondary level, special training for age appropriate admission of out of school children and residential as well as non-residential training for older children, seasonal hostels / residential camps, special training centers, age-appropriate residential and non-residential training, support to Out of School Children (16 to 19 years) for completion of education through NIOS/SIOS, Holistic Progress Card, bilingual teaching material and books.

Under the student-oriented component for the Children with Special Needs (CwSN), financial assistance is provided for identification and assessment of children with special needs, aids and appliances, braille kits and books, appropriate teaching learning material and stipend to girl students with disability etc. It also has provisions for creation of differently-abled friendly infrastructure such as ramps, ramps with handrails and differently-abled friendly toilets for barrier free access in schools. Further, to improve the identification of CwSN, the Government has introduced the Prashast App for early screening and identification of CwSN in regular schools. Teacher capacity building programs are being undertaken under NISHTHA in hybrid mode to train general teachers to address the learning needs of CwSN.

Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of Samagra Shiksha. In order to ensure greater participation of girls in school education, Samagra Shiksha promotes opening of schools in the neighbourhood to

make access easier for girls, free uniform to eligible girls and text-books to girls up to Class VIII, additional teachers and residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas, appointment of additional teachers including women teachers, stipend to CWSN girls from class 1 to class XII, separate toilets for girls, teachers sensitization programmes to promote girls participation, gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials including text books. In addition, to reduce gender gaps at all levels of school education and ensure access and quality education to girls, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) - which are residential schools for girls are operational.

A Digital Initiative - PM eVidya - unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education across the country. PM eVidya includes 200 DTH TV Channels allotted to States/UTs/Autonomous Bodies/Other Ministries in Government of India and 400 Radio channels to enable them to provide supplementary education as per their requirement in various Indian languages for classes 1-12. Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) is the Nation's One Nation, One Digital platform for providing quality e-content for school education in States/UTs along with QR coded Energised Textbooks (ETBs) for all grades.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has also launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at all the levels of school education, through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement. Further, the Government has decided to develop all functional 631 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) into Centers of Excellence in a phased manner starting from FY 2023-24.

PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan measures Learning Outcomes in rural/urban areas. It is used as a tool to engineer an equitable education system. PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 was conducted on 4th December, 2024 to understand the baseline performance among students at the end of the Foundational, Preparatory and Middle Stages in grade 3,6 and 9. National, State and District level reports for PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 are available at <https://dashboard.parakh.ncert.gov.in/en>.

Further, PM SHRI has been launched to strengthen more than 14,500 existing schools managed by Central government/State/UT Government/local bodies. These

schools are to showcase all the initiatives of National Education Policy 2020 and emerge as exemplar schools over a period of time, and also offer leadership to other schools in the neighbourhood. Till now, 13076 schools have been selected, of which 9373 are in rural areas while 3703 are in urban areas.

Need based convergence with different Ministries/Departments of the Central and State Governments has been an important aspect of bridging the gaps under Samagra Shiksha. The Department of School Education & Literacy has launched the “Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) with Schools” on 3rd September, 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Under the Scheme, the Annual Plans are prepared by the States and UTs, keeping in view their districts’ educational priorities and requirements. These plans are then assessed and appraised by the Project Approval Board in the Department and funds are released as per the norms of the Scheme and as per fund sharing pattern decided by the Ministry of Finance.
