

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

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 33
ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026

STUDENT RETENTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN SCHOOLS

33 Shri S Niranjana Reddy:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the 2026 NITI Aayog report on 'School Education System in India: Temporal Analysis' highlighting that 4 out of every 10 students drop out before completing higher secondary education;
- (b) whether it is a fact that only 5.4% of schools offer continuous education from Classes I to XII;
- (c) the reasons for the continued high dropout rate and poor learning outcomes despite the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020; and
- (d) the steps being taken to establish more composite schools and improve student retention and learning outcomes across the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) to (d) OF RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 33 FOR REPLY ON 22.07.2026 ASKED BY SHRI S
NIRANJAN REDDY HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING STUDENT
RETENTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN SCHOOLS:**

(a): NITI Aayog is an autonomous body. The report titled 'School Education System in India: Temporal Analysis and Policy Roadmap for Quality Enhancement' released by NITI Aayog has largely used data from UDISE+ reports of Department of School Education and Literacy up to year 2024-25. However, it may be informed that due to the collective efforts made by the Centre and State Governments, the performance under various indicators of UDISE+ including Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in secondary and higher secondary as well as transition rate have improved in the 2025-26, the details of which are as under :

Year	Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)		Transition Rate	Dropout Rate
	Secondary (9 to 10)	Higher Secondary (11 to 12)	Secondary to Higher Secondary (10-11)	Secondary
2024-25	78.7	58.4	75.1	11.5
2025-26	81.5	61.7	78.1	9.5

Source : UDISE+

(b): It may be pertinent to mention that the Central Government adopts a continuum – based approach to school education which treats education holistically from the foundational level to the senior secondary level with focus on creation of integrated school continuum, improved access to higher education, smoother transition between education stages, reduction in drop – outs, improved attendance through nutritional support, stronger foundational learning, improvement in teacher quality, and better monitoring and evidence based planning.

However, Education is a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and schools, other than those owned / funded by Central Government, are under the jurisdiction of the State Governments. The decision regarding which category of school needs to be established is largely taken by the States/UTs. The various factors taken into consideration while determining the category of the school include number of school going children, projected enrolment, availability of existing schools, geography, population distribution, local demand, availability of infrastructure, etc. As per UDISE+ 2025-26, a

total of 83,185 schools (5.67 percent schools) offer continuous education from Class I-XII. The number of Composite schools from 1-12 is as under :

Year	Total	Composite schools (1 to 12)	Percentage
2024-25	1471473	79980	5.43
2025-26	1466682	83185	5.67

Source : UDISE+

As may be observed from the table, the number of composite school from 1-12 have increased in 2025-26.

(c) & (d): Since the launch of Samagra Shiksha in 2018-19 and its subsequent alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 from 2021-22, sustained efforts have been undertaken to improve access, equity, retention and quality of school education. Implementation of NEP 2020 is a continuous and phased process involving the Central Government, States and Union Territories. UDISE+ data indicate improvement in participation indicators over recent years, including Gross Enrolment Ratio and transition rates at different stages of school education.

The key challenges with respect to drop out and learning outcomes vary across States and regions. Some of the challenges identified by States/UTs include socio economic condition of families, low parental literacy, domestic responsibilities on children, lack of interest among children, poor health of children, migration, gender related barriers, insufficient community participation, etc. The Central Government supports the States and UTs through Samagra Shiksha for addressing these challenges.

Under Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to States and Union Territories, based on their Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B), for strengthening school education infrastructure and improving access, retention and quality. The States/UTs follow different approaches specific to different regions or communities based on various factors responsible for dropouts. The need for schools and also the infrastructural facilities in schools, to ensure retention, 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). The interventions, under Samagra Shiksha inter alia, include:

- (i) establishment and upgradation of schools, including composite schools wherever proposed by the States/UTs;
- (ii) strengthening of school infrastructure including additional classrooms, science laboratories, libraries, ICT and smart classrooms;
- (iii) provision of transport and escort facilities in eligible areas;
- (iv) support for Balvatikas, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy under NIPUN Bharat;
- (v) teacher recruitment support as per norms, teacher training and capacity building;
- (vi) remedial teaching, inclusive education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN), guidance and counselling;
- (vii) vocational education, career guidance and adolescent education; and
- (viii) initiatives to improve transition, retention and learning outcomes through academic support and monitoring.

The National Education Policy, 2020 also envisages strengthening school complexes/clusters and promoting composite schools, wherever feasible, to facilitate continuity of schooling, efficient utilisation of resources and improved educational outcomes.

In order to facilitate continued learning, the Central Government through Samagra Shiksha and other initiatives supports all States and UTs for different interventions like composite school grant to every school for providing a conducive learning environment; upgradation of existing schools; funds for additional classrooms; grants for science labs, libraries, sports and physical activities; support for Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, ICT and digital initiatives; School Leadership development programme; remedial teaching for academically weaker students, etc.

In order to improve retention, the scheme includes the provision of opening and strengthening of new schools up to senior secondary level; construction of school buildings and additional classrooms; setting up, up-gradation and running of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas; setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas; free uniforms, free text books, transport allowance and undertaking enrolment & retention drives, construction of hostels under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for unsaturated ST population, reimbursement under RTE Act, various qualitative components, strengthening of teacher education and strengthening of DIETs/BRCs/CRCs, provision of ICT and digital interventions.

In addition, support is provided through special training for age-appropriate admission of Out of School Children and for the training of residential as well as non-residential older children (provisioning has been made to provide upto Rs. 6000 per child per annum for non – residential courses and upto Rs. 20,000 per child per annum for residential courses) . The provision of seasonal hostels or residential camps, special training centres at worksites, transport/ escort facility are also available for bringing Out of School Children to the formal schooling structure.

Financial assistance upto ₹ 2000 per annum is being provided for Out of School Children of age group of 16-19 years, belonging to socio economically disadvantaged groups, for completing their education through NIOS/SIOS, for accessing course materials and certification.

Under Centrally Sponsored Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme, one hot cooked and nutritious meal is provided to all children studying in Balvatika (just before class-I) and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools across the country.

Under the student-oriented component for the children with special needs of the scheme, 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.

The Samagra Shiksha scheme also gives attention to urban deprived children, children affected by periodic migration and children living in remote and scattered habitations. Under the scheme, provision has been made for giving preference to Special Focus Districts (SFDs), Educationally Backward Blocks (EEBs), LWE (Left Wing Extremism) affected districts, and aspirational districts while planning interventions.

To enhance the learning outcomes, the Samagra Shiksha Scheme has been aligned with NEP 2020 with focus on improving the quality of education and educational outcomes through various measures such as introduction of new pedagogical and curricular structure (5+3+3+4), Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), among others and covers the entire continuum of Education from 3 years of Balvatika (preschool) to class 12.

The NEP 2020 emphasizes developing relevant concepts and attaining requisite competencies to facilitate optimal learning when children start schooling. Keeping holistic

development in mind, a 3 Months Play Based School Preparation Module and Guidelines for Grade 1 named 'Vidya Pravesh' was launched on 29th July, 2021. The goal of Vidya Pravesh programme is to promote school preparedness in all children entering Grade- 1 from diverse backgrounds and to provide play based, age and developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a joyful and stimulating environment leading to holistic development. The 12-week module contains developmentally appropriate instructions for the children entering Grade 1 to bolster a child's pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, cognitive and social skills. All States/UTs are implementing the Vidya Pravesh programme.

A National Mission called "National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)" has been launched on 5th July, 2021 to ensure that every child in the country attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 2. Under Samagra Shiksha, all 36 States/Union Territories are implementing NIPUN-Bharat Mission.

The Government of India also conducts periodic large-scale assessments to measure learning and education outcomes across the country from time to time. More recently, the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (previously National Achievement Survey) 2024 was conducted on 4th December, 2024, by the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, NCERT under the aegis of the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education to measure the baseline performance under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in development of competencies among students at the end of the Foundational, Preparatory and Middle Stages (assessed in Grades 3, 6 and 9, respectively) of education.

The findings of PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 highlight a significant improvement when compared to National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 scores in foundational literacy and numeracy skills, thereby, reflecting the positive impact of the NIPUN Bharat Mission launched under NEP 2020.

To improve the Learning Outcomes at Foundational Stage (3 years of Balvatika and Grades 1 & 2), the National Curricular Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) was released on 20th October, 2022 providing a structure for the syllabus, Training of Teachers, Learning Teaching Material (LTM), etc. Accordingly, Jaadui Pitara for Balvatika (3 years of pre-school) and Books for Grades 1 & 2 have been developed and launched by NCERT for use by States/UTs. The Jaadui Pitara is a box having 53 Learning Teaching Materials (LTM) for the foundational stage. It has toys, games, puzzles,

puppets, posters, flashcards, story cards, play book set for students, and handbooks for teachers. Further, the e-Jaadui Pitara (e-JP) was launched on 10th February 2024. The e-JP is an app and website with integration of the latest technology with play-based pedagogy and a way to disseminate.

Further, with the objective to motivate teachers and principals , enhance their capabilities and enable them to teach better so that they can equip the students to develop critical thinking skills, the NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers'. Holistic Advancement) programme was launched in August 2019. This programme intends to enhance capabilities of the teachers and principals in areas including foundational literacy and numeracy, competency based learning, ICT integration, etc.

Further, with the objective to help showcase the implementation of NEP 2020 and build and demonstrate exemplar schools, the Government of India launched PM SHRI scheme in 2022. The scheme aims at upgrading over 14500 existing government schools with the intent to provide high quality education in equitable, inclusive and joyful environment. These schools will focus not only on enhancing cognitive development but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals.
