

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1955
ANSWERED ON 05.08.2026

Hygiene practices and environmental consciousness among school children

1955 **Dr. Dharmasthala Veerendra Heggade:**

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

- (a) whether Government accords high priority towards promoting health education, hygiene practices and environmental consciousness among school children, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government has developed special modules taking into account overall fitness and well-being, on various themes such as Asian Games sporting success, COVID-19 and Swachhata that attempt to address health and well-being, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures taken to integrate preventive health awareness, lifestyle education, promotion of sports and physical activities among students to develop healthy habits, integration of yoga into the morning assembly and awareness programmes on healthy lifestyle, fitness and prevention of lifestyle diseases?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (c): Education is a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India and the majority of schools are under the administrative control of the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) administration. However, recognising the importance of education, the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 has come into existence, which emphasises holistic development of learners including strengthening aspects related to health, wellness and environmental awareness in schools.

In line with the NEP, 2020, the Ministry of Education (MoE) accords high priority towards promoting health education, hygiene practices and environmental consciousness among school children through various schemes and initiatives such as Samagra Shiksha, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP), Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) and Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE. Moreover, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has incorporated themes related to health, nutrition, hygiene, air pollution and environmental sustainability in school curricula, textbooks and learning material at different stages of school education in an age-appropriate manner.

Under the centrally sponsored scheme of Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme, one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Schemes implemented in partnership with the States/UTs, about 10.23 crore students studying in Bal Vatika and classes I to VIII in about 10.33 lakh Govt. and Govt. aided schools are served healthy hot cooked nutritious meals on all school days. Importance of eating healthy and balanced diet, knowledge of junk foods, nutritional fortification, sanitation and hygiene practices such as handwash and importance of School Nutrition Gardens (SNGs), are also promoted under the scheme.

Under the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha, the MoE supports States/UTs in setting up Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE in all schools in order to sensitize students to environmental/climate change concerns and inculcate environment friendly attitudes and behavior among them. Under the aegis of Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE, school students participate in hands-on environment-related activities, including plantation of saplings, nature walks, cleanliness drives etc.

The MoE is promoting sports and physical education in schools through multiple policy and programme interventions aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy emphasizes sports-integrated learning and recognizes sports as an integral part of the curriculum for holistic development, promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and lifelong healthy habits. To operationalize these objectives, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) integrates sports and physical education across all stages of schooling through sports-based pedagogy. The framework also places special emphasis on yoga in schools. Further, under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, a dedicated component on Sports and Physical Education has been introduced to promote sports activities, fitness programmes and yoga in government schools. One of the major objectives of this component is to ensure the holistic development of students by making them physically, mentally, psychologically, socially and emotionally fit.

As recommended under NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023, NCERT has developed dedicated textbooks on Sports and Physical Education for different stages of schooling, with special emphasis on yoga. These include Khel–Yoga for the Preparatory Stage (Grades III–V), Khel Yatra for the Middle Stage (Grades VI–VIII), and Khel–Praveen for the Secondary Stage (Grade IX). The textbooks introduce students to the concepts of physical education, Yoga for Daily Life, and basic Yog Sadhana in an age-appropriate manner. These textbooks are already in use in schools and contribute significantly to the holistic development of students including physical, mental and socio emotional wellbeing.

In order to promote Sports & physical education and fitness among school going children several national initiatives have also been taken by this Department. Large scale participation activities such as the International Day of Yoga, National Yoga Olympiad, Fit India Movement, sports events under Khelo India and National Sports Day further encourage active lifestyles in schools. Additionally, the CBSE Health and Physical Education (HPE) programme has made sports compulsory for all Classes, ensuring structured physical activity and participation in sports including yoga as part of the school curriculum.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has informed that the MoHFW and MoE jointly implement the School Health and Wellness Programme since 2020. Under this, two teachers per school trained as Health and Wellness Ambassadors (HWAs) conduct regular sessions on 11 themes including nutrition, health and sanitation, growing up healthy, and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has informed that it implements the Environment Education Programme (EEP), as a component of the Central Sector Scheme Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development (EEARSD), aimed at supplementing the efforts of the MoE in the formal education front through varied pedagogical initiatives for imparting non-formal environment education. The objective of EEP is to sensitise children and youth on issues related to environment and to motivate them to adopt sustainable lifestyles through varied pedagogical initiatives such as workshops, projects, exhibitions, campaigns, competitions, nature camps and summer vacation programmes. The programme supplements classroom knowledge with exposure to nature and hands-on activities. The activities under EEP are aligned with the seven themes of Mission LiFE, including “Adopt Sustainable Food System” and “Adopt Healthy Lifestyle”. The programme is implemented by designated State/UT-level implementing agencies for children and youth through eco-clubs formed in schools and colleges. The focus is on hands-on training and experiential learning. Some of the initiatives undertaken under the programme include Sustainable Lifestyle Workshops, Zero Waste Initiatives, alternatives to Single Use Plastic, Millet Food Fests, cleanliness drives/beach-cleaning activities, development of kitchen, medicinal and herbal gardens, segregation of dry and wet waste, vermicomposting, yoga and trail walk during nature camp, etc. Thematic campaigns are also conducted for celebrations of various environmental days.
