

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 4308
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2016**

Accessibility to Schools in remote areas

4308. SHRI PREM DAS RAI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has assessed the average travel distance to a middle school in the mountain States and North-East Region in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the rate of drop out from primary to middle school in such areas compared to the national average in this regard;
- (c) the details of the steps taken to improve access to schools in said region; and
- (d) whether guidelines in this regard may be revised in mountain districts given the terrain and remoteness of the region and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA)**

(a): In pursuance to Section 6 of the Right of the Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 the Central Government has notified the area or limits of neighbourhood within which an elementary school has to be established by the appropriate Government or the local authority. Accordingly, Central Rules provide for opening of primary and upper primary schools within a walking distance of one and three kilometers of the neighbourhood respectively. All States and UTs have notified area or limits of their neighbourhood norms, factoring in their state specific conditions, for opening of schools in accordance with the Central Rules.

(b): As per Unified District Information System for Education, 2015-16 (provisional), average dropout rate at national level and in respect of mountain States and North-East Region in the country at primary and upper primary level is as below:

Sl. No.	State	Dropout rate at Primary level	Dropout Rate at Upper Primary level
	National Level	4.13	4.03
1	Himachal Pradesh	0.64	0.87
2	Uttarakhand	4.04	1.19
3	Jammu & Kashmir	6.79	5.44
4	Arunachal Pradesh	10.82	6.71
5	Assam	15.36	10.51
6	Manipur	9.66	4.2
7	Meghalaya	9.46	6.52
8	Mizoram	10.1	4.78
9	Nagaland	5.61	7.92
10	Sikkim	2.27	1.57
11	Tripura	1.28	1.99

(c): The RTE Act, 2009 provisions for free and compulsory education to children between the age group of 6-14 years. The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) provides assistance to State Governments and UTs to ensure quality elementary education for all children. Universal enrolment is the first goal of SSA, and hence all efforts are being made to bring all children in schools. SSA has provided 24731 primary and 15124 upper primary schools to 3 Himalayan States and 8 States from North East Region for ensuring universal provisioning of schooling facilities. Preference for opening of school is given to tribal areas, and areas with high concentration of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and minority population. In addition, 285 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, which are residential schools for girls at upper primary level, have also been sanctioned to the Himalayan States and States from North East Region for improving access to marginalised girls particularly out of school, either drop out or never enrolled.

Under SSA, provisions have also been made for residential schools/hostels and transportation/ escort facility for children living in sparsely populated areas, children living in areas where schools cannot be opened due to unavailability of land and children in need of care and protection. Under the SSA, 166 residential schools and 84 hostels have been sanctioned to these States as on 31.03.2016. Special training is also provided to all such children who are school dropouts and long absentees.

Additionally, other strategies adopted under SSA such as strengthening school infrastructure, improving pupil-teacher ratios, providing incentives like free textbooks,

uniforms for all girls, children from SC/ST community, below poverty line children and mid-day meal in schools have proved to be useful in increasing the enrolment of children in elementary schools.

(d): The Central RTE Rules make provision for relaxation of norms for opening of primary and upper primary school in places with difficult terrain where there may be risk of landslides, floods, lack of roads and in general, danger for young children in the approach from their homes to the school.
