

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1317  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2019**

**Weight of School Bags**

**1317. SHRIMATI POONAMBEN MAADAM:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has recently instructed all States and Union Territories to formulate guidelines to regulate or moderate the teaching of subjects and weight limit of school bag;
- (b) if so, the details thereof with regard to the prescribed guidelines along with the weight limit of school bags;
- (c) whether any mechanism to monitor that schools are implementing the said guidelines; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
(DR. SATYA PAL SINGH)**

(a) to (d): The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 provides the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school to the children of the age of 6 to 14 years till the completion of elementary education (upto 8<sup>th</sup> class). Section 29 (1) of the RTE Act, 2009 states that the curriculum and the evaluation procedure for elementary education shall be laid down by an academic authority to be specified by the appropriate Government, by notification. The Central Government is the appropriate Government only in relation to a school established, owned and controlled by the Central Government, or the administrator of the Union Territory, having no legislature. In other cases, State Governments and UT Governments are the appropriate Governments, in relation to a school established within the territory of a State or a UT having legislature, respectively.

As per the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005 brought out by NCERT, the concept of time on task is essential reckoner for taking stock of the total time that the children spent actively on learning. This would include time spent on listening, reading, writing, doing activities and discussing etc. particularly in multi grade classes, planning and designing of learning activities for children need to ensure that children's time on task is maximized. Total study time that is expected from students in both face to face and self study or homework needs to be accounted for while planning the syllabus for course of study for students, especially as they are going to higher grade.

The NCF, 2005 further recommends all schools not to have any homework in Classes I and II. It further recommends two hours homework per week from Class III. For middle schools, the homework prescribed is one hour a day (about five to six hours a week). For secondary and higher secondary classes, two hours of homework a day (about ten to twelve hours a week) is prescribed.

The (NCF)-2005 also addresses the issue related to curriculum load keeping in view the Yash Pal Committee Report (1993) titled 'Learning Without Burden'. NCF states that 'Heavy School Bags' is the common source of physical discomfort due to heavy encyclopedic types of information loaded textbooks. To overcome this problem, NCF emphasizes upon shifting learning away from rote methods, connecting knowledge to life outside school, enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric and making examination more flexible and integrated to classroom life.

The NCERT has taken following initiatives in this context:

- (i) New syllabi and textbooks reflect the NCF 2005 perspective on curriculum load and are interactive and based on child centered pedagogy. The NCERT textbooks and other teaching learning materials are available online on its website [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in).
- (ii) NCERT has not developed any textbook for early childhood education (LKG, UKG).

- (iii) NCERT recommends only two books (language and mathematics) for Classes I and II and three books (language, EVS and mathematics) for Classes III to V.
- (iv) NCF 2005 suggests that autonomy should be given to the schools to develop their own flexible time tables so that school can teach two or three subject each day giving students more time to do activities and develop deeper understanding of the concept. The NCERT addresses this issue incapacity building programme for teacher and school heads.
- (v) e-Pathshala platform which contains e-resource for students from Classes I to XII.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has advised schools to ensure that no homework is given to students till class II vide their circular dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. Circulars have been issued by the CBSE specifying the number of textbooks to be prescribed in Classes I-VIII as per NCERT curriculum to reduce the weight of school bag.

However, it has come to notice that many schools, especially private schools are not following the above prescriptions and recommend extra books and homework for children. In view of this, the Central Government has issued a communication dated 05/10/2018 to all States and UTs, in compliance to the order of the Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras dated 29/05/2018 in W.P. 25680 of 2017- M. Purushothaman Vs Union of India and Others, in this matter. Further, an expert group has been constituted to formulate a policy on 'children's school bags' at the National level.

\*\*\*