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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 2981

ANSWERED ON – 07/08/2023

Weakened Knowledge of Students by COVID-19

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2981.   SHRI E.T. MOHAMMED BASHEER:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government is aware that the educational loss of the whole academic year during COVID-19 has weakened the foundation knowledge of the students; and

(b)   if so, the steps taken by the Government to bridge the gap in these educational loss?

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ANSWER

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MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) & (b)   Due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, schools in States and Union Territories (UT) were closed as a precautionary measure to protect the students. This has interrupted the learning of students from pre-school to grade 12. Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. During the pandemic, Ministry of Education held several consultations with the States and UTs to assess the various aspects and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the closure of schools pan-India students at all level suffered learning losses.

In order to mitigate the impact of challenges thrown by the COVID-19 pandemic for migrant children and for preventing drop outs, lower enrolments and loss of learning, the Ministry of Education issued guidelines for identification, smooth admission process and continued education of migrant children on 13.07.2020. To ensure that children have access to education with quality and equity and to minimize the impact of the pandemic on school education in the country, the Department of School Education had prepared and issued detailed guidelines on 7th January, 2021, on the steps to be taken by the States and UTs. The guidelines, among others, include identification of out of school children from age 6-18 years, enrolment drives and awareness generation, student support while schools are closed, continued education for children with Special Needs (CWSN), student support on school reopening and Teacher capacity building. The Department of School Education and Literacy vide letter dated 4th May, 2021 had shared a comprehensive Covid Action plan with States/UTs and other stakeholders for mitigating the loss of learning.

A comprehensive initiative PM eVIDYA which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education was used extensively during the COVID period for education of children. The initiative includes, the following components:

- DIKSHA the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs: and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades (one nation, one digital platform)
- One earmarked PM eVidya DTH TV channel per class from 1 to 12.
- Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani
- Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube

Where the digital facility (mobile device/ DTH television) was not available, Ministry of Education has taken many initiatives like Community Radio Stations and a podcast called Shiksha Vani of CBSE, Textbooks, worksheet supplied to residence of learners, Handbook on 21st Century Skills and community/mohalla classes were organized. Innovation Funds of the Department were used to set up mobile school, virtual studios, virtual class rooms in schools, Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) for States/UTs was initiated in all States/UTs, pre-loaded tablets under Samagra Shiksha in various states and UTs were effectively used in remote/rural areas where online classes were difficult. Further in order to provide continuous professional development opportunities to the teachers at the elementary level, this Department launched the NISHTHA online training programme using DIKSHA platform in October 2020. NISHTHA online for elementary level covered 18 modules in 11 languages, including use of ICT in teaching-learning.

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