

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 119
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021

Access to Textbooks

*119. SHRI D.K. SURESH:
SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is true that during the lockdown period half of the students did not have access to textbooks and in the absence of physical schooling, they suffered huge learning losses;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has made any assessment to find out the actual number of students who could not get access to education during the lockdown period;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government is taking any measures to enable the students to fill the gap of learning losses caused by this lack of access to education and if so, give details?

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 PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 119 TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021 ASKED BY HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT SHRI D.K. SURESH AND SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH REGARDING "ACCESS TO TEXTBOOKS."

(a) to (d) The spread of COVID-19 pandemic has impacted school education. Schools in States and Union Territories were closed as a precautionary measure to protect the students from Novel COVID-19 (Corona) virus. 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 COVID-19 Pandemic, Ministry of Education held continuous consultations with the States and UTs at various levels to assess the various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has conducted a survey in the month of July, 2020 with the help of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to understand the scenario of Online Learning of school students in COVID-19 pandemic situation. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) was conducted on 12.11.2021 in 717 districts of the country to assess learning levels of sampled children of grades 3, 5, 8 and 10.

Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha, an outlay of Rs. 2871.73 crore had been approved for distributing free text books to 9.73 crore children at the elementary level in 2020-21. During the lockdown, Textbooks and worksheets were supplied to residence of learners and community/mohalla classes were organized. Innovation Funds of Department of School Education & Literacy were used to set up mobile school, virtual studios, virtual class rooms in schools. Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) for States/UTs has been initiated in all States/UTs, pre-loaded tablets provided under Samagra Shiksha in various States and UTs are effectively used in remote/rural areas where online classes are difficult.

Samagra Shiksha has been aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in order to ensure inclusive and equitable, quality and holistic school education. The major interventions, across all levels of school education, proposed under the scheme are: (i) Universal Access including Infrastructure Development and Retention; (ii) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, (iii) Gender and Equity; (iv) Inclusive Education; (v) Quality and Innovation; (vi) Financial support for Teacher Salary; (vii) Digital initiatives; (viii) RTE Entitlements including uniforms, textbooks etc.; (ix) Support for ECCE; (x) Vocational Education; (xi) Sports and Physical Education; (xii) Strengthening of Teacher Education and Training;(xiii) Monitoring; (xiv) Programme Management; and (xv) National Component. Samagra Shiksha also has a clear focus on bridging and eliminating gender differences in enrolment, retention and quality of learning.

A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy called "National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)" has been launched by the Ministry of Education (MoE) on 5th July 2021 under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha. The National Mission lays down priorities and actionable agendas for States/UTs to achieve the goal of proficiency in foundational literacy and numeracy for every child by grade 3. under the aegis of the

centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha which is an integrated scheme of school education covering from Pre-School to Senior Secondary level.

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 has 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 has shared a comprehensive Covid Action plan with States/UTs and other stakeholders for mitigating the loss of learning. Bridge Course Modules have been developed for bridging the learning gaps of Out of School Children studying in Special Training Centers (STC) under the provision of RTE Act, 2009. Vidya Pravesh has been launched for class 1st students. This is a play preparation 3 months program which prepare students for school through playschools. Through this scheme all the remote students will have access to play schools. This scheme aims at spreading the concept of playschools to the remotest parts of the country. It aims to ensure that no student is deprived of education.

A comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes, where work is in progress:

- 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 Swayam Prabha TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (one class, one channel)
- 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

In view of the COVID-19 challenges and 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. Around 24 lakh teachers completed NISHTHA online training at elementary level by June, 2021. Further, NISHTHA online training has also been initiated for secondary teachers and teachers teaching at foundational level.
