

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1190
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021**

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

†1190. SHRI KUNWAR PUSHPENDRA SINGH CHANDEL:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether education and educational institutions have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (b) whether the Government has taken any initiative to assess the situation;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government is contemplating taking special measures to reform the education system adversely affected in rural and urban areas; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)**

(a): 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, Colleges and University are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments.

(b) & (c): 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.

(d) & (e): 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 the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha which is an integrated scheme of school education covering from Pre-School to Senior Secondary level. 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. This Department has also developed an online module for compiling the data of Out of School children identified by each State/UT and their mapping with Special Training Centres (STC) on the PRABANDH Portal (<http://samagrashiksha.in>). The portal requires the concerned State/UT to validate the child wise information of the identified OOSC and STC uploaded by the concerned Block Resource Centre of the State for monitoring the progress of mainstreaming of OOSC. Also, 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.

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.

Further, University Grants Commission (UGC) has also issued notices/advisories to Higher Education Institutions from time to time to contain the spread of COVID-19 and other academic related matters. UGC has framed guidelines for reopening of the campuses which inter alia deals with the safety and well being of the students. UGC has also issued a letter dated 06.07.2020 regarding Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Conduct of Examinations in Higher Education Institutions to be taken in view of COVID-19 situation.

The UGC vide letter dated 27.05.2020 issued an Advisory to the Universities and colleges that in view of the prevailing extraordinary difficult circumstances, universities and colleges may consider the matter regarding payment of annual/semester fee, tuition fee, examination fee, etc. sympathetically and if feasible, may consider offering alternative payment options to students till the situation returns to normal. The UGC has issued Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar for the Universities in View of COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent Lockdown on 29th April, 2020. The guidelines were subsequently revised and notified on 06.07.2020 directing the universities to complete the final year / semester examination by the end of September, 2020. These guidelines are available on UGC website at www.ugc.ac.in.

In order to promote the online education, UGC has notified necessary regulation, which facilitates the Universities to offer full-fledged Online Program. Further, the current provisions of 20 per cent Online courses in a programme, as per provisions of UGC SWAYAM and ODL Regulations, enhanced up to maximum 40 per cent for implementation considering “National interest during COVID-19” and also to ensure effective utilization of e-resources. The Ministry of Education has also launched Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT), a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 1 higher education faculty using the MOOCs platform SWAYAM. Various digital initiatives are being undertaken by Ministry of education viz. SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha, National Digital Library (NDL), Virtual Lab, e-Yantra, FOSSEE (Free Open-Source Software for Education) etc to ensure quality education to the students. Quality Online courses are provided through SWAYAM which is an indigenously developed MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) platform.
