

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1329
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021**

Education Programmes

1329. SHRI GIRISH CHANDRA:
SHRI D.K.SURESH:
SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH:
SHRI NALIN KUMAR KATEEL:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is cognizant of prevalent digital divide in online learning in education between urban and rural areas and if so, the steps taken to ensure that each child has access to education viz digital modes at a personal level and the cost which has been incurred on the project;
- (b) if not, the steps taken by the Government to address the gap;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any comprehensive assessment of the digital divide or its impact on remote education across the country;
- (d) if so, the findings of the assessment ;
- (e) whether the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education recommended to the Government to compile a similar assessment of State Government-run schools;
- (f) if so, whether the Government has taken any steps to conduct the similar assessment of all the State Government schools in the country; and
- (g) the findings of the assessments and the action taken/ proposed to be taken thereon ?

ANSWER

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

(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, Colleges and University 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. A sample survey was conducted in the month of July, 2020 for schools of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) by the Department. Subsequently, further surveys were conducted in early 2021 regarding availability of various forms of digital devices with children. NVS has reported 92.95% and KVS has more than 98% of students having full or partial access to some digital device.

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.

Centrally Sponsored Scheme 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. Further, to mitigate the effect of covid-19, Department of School Education and Literacy allocated a total of Rs. 5784.05 crores under Samagra Shiksha during the year 2020-21,

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. 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. Further, 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

Where the digital facility (mobile device/ DTH television) is 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 Handbook on 21st Century Skills and community/mohalla classes are being organized. Innovation Funds of the Department 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 under Samagra Shiksha in various states and UTs are effectively used in remote/rural areas where online classes are 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.

(e) to (g): Yes, as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, the Department advised the States/UTs to conduct survey of children with access and without access to digital devices. Accordingly, various initiatives were taken by the Ministry of Education, States and Union Territories to mitigate the effect of the Covid pandemic on school education. A detailed report on these initiatives may be seen at the website of Education Ministry at following link:

https://dse1.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/update/covid_initiatives.pdf

