

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3635
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2021

Closure of Schools

3635. SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is true that disruption of education due to prolonged closure of schools across the globe is likely to have alarming effects on learning loss and it also poses threat to gender equality and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is aware that there is a need to take corrective steps to do justice as girls study time was constrained by increased household chores; and
- (c) if so, the response of the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (c) 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.

In order to mitigate the impact of closure of schools on school children including girls and for preventing drop outs, lower enrolments and loss of learning, instructions and guidelines have been issued by Ministry of Education to the States & UTs time to time for continuing education of children including girls. The States and UTs have also been suggested steps/actions such as identification of out of school children from age 6 to 18 years, enrolment drives and awareness generation, continued education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN), student support while schools are closed including worksheets and text books supplied to residence of learners, home visits by teachers, community classes etc., to be taken during the school closure and when the schools re-open.

In addition, all States and UTs have been asked to issue necessary directions to the concerned authorities to proactively track girls who are not enrolled in schools or have dropped-out of school without completing their school education and get them admitted in age-appropriate classes in schools.

The Government of India launched SamagraShiksha-an Integrated Scheme for school education, w.e.f. 2018-19, as an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha. Under Samagra Shiksha, to reduce dropout rate and ensure greater participation of girls in education various interventions have been targeted which include opening of schools in the neighbourhood to make access easier for girls, free uniform and text-books to girls up to Class VIII, additional teachers and residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas, appointment of additional teachers including women teachers, Stipend to CWSN girls from class I to Class XII , separate toilets for girls, teachers' sensitization programmes to promote girls participation, gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials including text books etc.

Under Samagra Shiksha, Special state specific projects for varied interventions under equity are emphasized for enhancing access, retention and quality for girls by promoting enrolment drives, retention and motivation camps, gender sensitization modules etc. Such projects include Life Skills, Awareness programmes, Incinerators, Sanitary Pad Vending Machines etc. To reduce gender gaps at all levels of school education, there is a provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) under Samagra Shiksha. KGBVs are residential schools from class VI to XII for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, Minority and Below Poverty Line (BPL). A total of 5615 KGBVs have been sanctioned in the country with the enrolment of 6.50 lakh girls.

Further, in Kendriya Vidyalayas, girls have been exempted from paying tuition fees from class I to XII and education is free for girls in classes from VI to XII who happen to be the only child of their parents.
