

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1871
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2022**

Closure of Schools for Longer Period

1871. SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is true that India is the second country after Uganda where offline schools were shut for the longest period of time;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is true that many reports suggest the online teaching as a threat to child's cognitive development and if so, the reasons for Government promoting blended mode of education in this year's budget; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (d) As per the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report, India is the second country after Uganda where offline schools were shut for the longest period of time. However, the Report does not mention the methodology used in the study and the source of this data is stated to be a study by a non-governmental organisation.

Schools were closed as a precautionary measure to protect the students from Novel COVID-19 (Corona) virus across the world. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) vide their order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 30th September, 2020 has stated that State/UT Governments may take a decision in respect of re-opening of schools, after 15th October, 2020, in a graded manner and the decision shall be taken in consultation with the respective school/institution management, based on their assessment of the situation. The Department of School Education and Literacy has issued detailed SOP/guidelines regarding health and safety precautions for reopening of schools after issue of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) guidelines for unlock-5, on 5th October, 2020. These guidelines have been revised vide letter 17th December, 2021. These guidelines can be accessed at following links respectively.

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SOP_Guidelines_for_reopening_schools_0.pdf

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Modifications_SoP.pdf

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the education system not only in India but also in countries across the world due to closure of schools. This also lead to a situation where the Centre, States and educational institutions had to adopt online technologies and Blended Mode of Education at a very rapid pace to ensure continued education of the students. 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 and community/mohalla classes. Innovation Funds under Samagra Shiksha have been used to set up mobile school, virtual studios, virtual class rooms in schools, Continuous Learning Plan (CLP), pre-loaded tablets etc. in various states and UTs in remote/rural areas where online classes are difficult. The Union Budget 2022-23 has given a major push to the education with a total allocation of Rs 1,04,278 crore, which is an increase of nearly 12 % over the previous year.
