

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2008
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2022**

Impact of COVID-19 on Private School Children

†2008. SHRI SATYADEV PACHAURI:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether schools education has been affected due to Corona for the last two years and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the income of the people has decreased due to the disaster and lakhs of children studying in private schools in the country are unable to pay their fees;
- (c) if so, whether the Government proposes to take any step to help such children;
- (d) whether the Government has any plan to check the arbitrariness of private schools and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the increasing scope of private schools becoming a hindrance in the better implementation of the Right of Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009; and
- (f) whether it has been stated in the USIDC Plus report that only 22 per cent of the schools in the country have internet facility and if so, the manner in which education through digital medium is likely to be expanded?

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 across the world. Schools in States and Union Territories (UT) were closed as a precautionary measure to protect the students from Novel COVID-19 (Corona) virus. This has interrupted the learning of students. During the pandemic, Ministry of Education has held several consultations with the States and UTs to assess the various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. After discussion with the States and UTs, a multi-pronged approach has been adopted leveraging technology to reach the students. 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.

Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. Thus, the matter relating to fees and its components in schools are regulated in terms of Rules and Instructions of the State Government concerned. It is for the respective State Government concerned to take necessary action against such schools which violate the Rules and Instructions of the State Government in the matter. So far as schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are concerned, the Board has issued circular on 17th April, 2020 to all the State Education Department with the request to consider issuing suitable instructions on periodicity of payment of school fees and payment of salaries to the teaching and non-teaching staff to be applicable during the period of pandemic. The circular can be accessed on the website

https://www.lms.org.in/assets/front/pdf/Fee_payment_Circular_dated17April2020.pdf

In order to mitigate the impact of challenges thrown by the COVID-19 pandemic for migrant children and children from economically weaker section 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. Guidelines for Children of Migrant Labours focus on providing admission to the in-migrant children in the nearby government schools without the requirement of submitting any document except an identity card. As per these guidelines, the residential school students should also be provided temporary admission in schools nearby their homes, as they may not go back to their residential schools during COVID19.

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>).

(e) Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of the respective State and UT Government which is the appropriate government under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The RTE Act, 2009 effective from 1st April, 2010 is applicable to all States and UTs and mandates the appropriate Government to provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child of the age 6 to 14 years in a neighbourhood school. Ministry of Education issues various advisories/guidelines to all the States/UTs to ensure the implementation of all the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009 in all the schools (including Private Schools) in their respective jurisdiction from time to time. Further the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to make it easier for both governments as well as non-government philanthropic organisations to build schools, to encourage local variations on account of culture, geography and demographics, and to allow alternative models of Education.

(f) Based on the UDISE Plus report 2019-20, 22% schools had access to internet. The Government has taken various steps to provide online education amidst COVID-19 pandemic. These include PRAGYATA Guidelines on various modes of digital education including online mode that depends more on availability of internet, partially online mode that utilizes the blended approach of digital technology and other offline activities, partial and offline mode that utilizes television and radio as a major medium of instruction of education. The guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf

The state governments have been asked to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of all students for providing them with the digital access required for learning digitally. In order to enable online education benefit to the children of every category and teachers, Learning Enhancement Guidelines have been issued. The guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Learning_Enhancement_0.pdf

Further, to improve the internet connectivity in rural areas the CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd (CSC-SPV) of MEITY has been assigned the task of providing Fiber to the Home (FTTH) connectivity to the Government Institutions, including schools.
