

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO- 340
ANSWERED ON- 16.03.2026

EDUCATION SYSTEM AT SEEMANCHAL REGION IN BIHAR

†*340. Shri Tariq Anwar:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of concrete steps taken by the Government to provide nutritious meals to the students under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Bihar, particularly in the Seemanchal region;
- (b) whether any specific study or intervention programme has been introduced by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to curb the drop-out rate rising in the said areas, as mentioned in the UNESCO 2023 report, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the progress of the ongoing schemes for providing of digital infrastructure and for filling up vacant posts of teachers in the schools of the said backward regions under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan; and
- (d) the extent to which the provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly those related to multilingual education and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) have been implemented in line with the NCERT framework in the sensitive regions like Seemanchal?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 340 FOR 16.03.2026 RAISED BY SHRI TARIQ ANWAR, HON'BLE MP REGARDING EDUCATION SYSTEM AT SEEMANCHAL REGION IN BIHAR.

(a): Education is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and most of the Government Schools and School Boards are under the administration of the State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations. Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership with the States and UTs for providing one hot cooked and nutritious meal to all children studying in Bal Vatika (just before class-I) and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools, including those in Bihar. The Scheme covers about 11 crore children in more than 10.35 lakh schools in all the States/UTs. The overall responsibility for smooth functioning of the scheme including providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children as well as engagement of cook-cum-helpers (CCHs) lies with the States/UTs. The State/UTs are encouraged to decide menu suitable to the local conditions within the prescribed nutrition and food norms and to procure locally grown food items. During FY 2025-26, central assistance of Rs. 1274.39 crore has been released to the state of Bihar under PM POSHAN Scheme benefitting more than 1 crore students in 68,357 schools. The number of schools and children benefitting from PM POSHAN Scheme in Seemanchal region in Bihar are as follows:

District	Number of Schools	Number of children
Araria	1933	309791
Purnia	2204	392659
Katihar	1892	371858
Kishanganj	1697	214310

*Source: Government of Bihar

Further, measures such as school nutrition gardens, regular health check-ups, community participation, and monitoring through inspection are undertaken to ensure quality and nutritious meals, including in Seemanchal region in Bihar.

(b): The key reasons for drop out as identified by States/UTs include migration, socio economic condition of families, domestic responsibilities on children, lack of interest of children, poor health of children, etc.

The Ministry of Education supports all States and UTs for different interventions like composite school grant to every school for providing a conducive learning environment, grants for science labs, libraries, sports and physical activities, support for Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, ICT and digital initiatives, School Leadership development programme, remedial teaching for academically weaker students, etc.

In order to reduce dropout the Samagra Shiksha Scheme includes the provision of opening and strengthening of new schools up to senior secondary level; construction of school buildings and additional classrooms; setting up, up-gradation and running of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas; setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas; free uniforms, free text books, transport allowance, undertaking enrolment & retention drives, construction of hostels under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for unsaturated ST population, reimbursement under RTE Act, various qualitative components, strengthening of teacher education and strengthening of DIETs/BRCs/CRCs, provision of ICT.

Under the student-oriented component for the children with special needs of the scheme, financial assistance is provided for identification and assessment of children with special needs, aids and appliances, braille kits and books, appropriate teaching learning material and stipend to girl students with disability etc.

Under Samagra Shiksha scheme, provision has been made also for giving preference to Special Focus Districts (SFDs), Educationally Backward Blocks (EEBs), LWE (Left Wing Extremism) affected districts, and aspirational districts while planning interventions.

Government has also taken initiatives such as Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) and implementation of Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID to monitor the drop out and other education indicators. VSK has been developed with strategies designed to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring of educational initiatives and their eventual outcomes. A key feature of VSK is tracking of dropout students, monitoring of students migrating from one school to the other, progress of learning outcomes and real-time monitoring of various interventions, aimed at improving access, students' academic performance and enhancing teachers' accountability in schools. APAAR, as part of the 'One Nation, One Student ID' programme, is a 12-digit lifelong student ID that is linked to Aadhar.

(c): Under Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to all States/UTs including State of Bihar, for setting up ICT Labs and Smart Classrooms in Government and Government Aided Schools having classes VI to XII. Ministry of Education has advised all States/ UTs including State of Bihar to enter into Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)/ Agreements with BSNL to provide FTTH internet connections to Government schools having computing devices. The recurring Internet charges would be met from funds approved under Samagra Shiksha or any other State/ UT Government funds. The details of ICT Labs, Smart Classrooms, and Internet connectivity in the districts of Seemanchal region in Bihar is as under:

Districts	ICT Labs	Smart Classrooms	Internet Connectivity
Araria	166	177	861
Purnia	261	363	1116
Katihar	187	268	976
Kishanganj	122	115	634

*Source: UDISE+ 2024-25

Under Samagra Shiksha, teacher capacity building for digital education is being supported through the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) platform, which provides e-content and digital learning resources. The Ministry of Education has also implemented NISHTHA as an integrated teacher training programme on DIKSHA, which includes modules related to the use of ICT and technology in teaching and learning. Further, NCERT, State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) undertake development of resource material, digital content, training programmes and workshops to strengthen teachers' preparedness for digital education.

NCTE has notified ITEP, a 4-year integrated dual-major bachelor degree in Education as well as a specialized subject in arts, science, physical education etc for pre-service teachers. Being digitally literate and skilled to leverage technology for improving teaching-learning and assessment processes is one of the capacities sought to be developed by all student-teachers under ITEP.

Education being a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution, the recruitment, deployment, service conditions and professional development of teachers are primarily under the administrative control of the respective States/ UTs. Accordingly, the information relating to sanctioned and vacant posts of teachers is maintained by the concerned States/UTs.

Recruitment of teachers is a continuous process undertaken by the respective States/UTs in accordance with their recruitment rules and procedures. Vacancies arise from time to time due to factors such as retirement, resignation, creation of new posts consequent to enhanced student enrolment and establishment of new schools. The timeline for filling up such vacancies is also determined by the respective States/ UTs.

The Government of India also periodically reviews the progress relating to filling up of teacher vacancies with States/UTs through review meetings and advisories, emphasising recruitment through transparent and merit-based selection processes, including competitive examinations conducted by autonomous teacher recruitment boards and technology-based teacher requirement planning and forecasting exercises.

(d): In the NEP, 2020, for the first time, 3 years of pre-schools (Balvatika) is recognized as a continuum of education in the 5+3+3+4 structure where the foundational stage is 3 years of pre-school and grade 1 & grade 2. The Ministry of Education through the schemes/ programmes/ initiatives has ensured that the States & Union Territories (UTs) receive adequate central support to integrate three years of pre-primary education into the new Foundational Stage (FS).

In order to integrate the pre-school (Balvatika) in the foundational stage and to promote multilingualism, following progress has been made:

- NIPUN Bharat Mission: As envisaged in NEP 2020, a flagship national mission called “NIPUN Bharat” was launched on 5th July, 2021 for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains FLN by the end of Grade 2. This Mission has been set up under the aegis of the Samagra Shiksha. All 36 States/Union Territories are implementing NIPUN-Bharat Mission (NBM). Financial norms for the following components are provided under the NBM:
- Support to pre-school education/co-located anganwadi centers (recurring & non-recurring)
- Teaching Learning Materials for implementation of Innovative pedagogies
- Teacher Resource Material/Activity Handbook
- Capacity building of Teachers of Grades I & II
- Independent, periodic and holistic assessment of students
- Formation of Project Management Unit (PMU) at state and district level
- NCF-FS: National Curricular Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) was released on 20th October, 2022 providing a structure for the syllabus, training of teachers, Learning Teaching Material (LTM), etc. It is the first ever integrated curriculum framework for children between ages 3-8 in India.
- Vidya Pravesh: A 3-months play based ‘School Preparation Module and Guidelines’ for Grade I named ‘Vidya Pravesh’ was launched on 29th July, 2021. The goal of Vidya Pravesh programme is to promote school preparedness in all children coming to Grade- I from diverse backgrounds [Balvatika, Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), at home, private play schools etc.], to ensure a smooth transition of children to Grade-I. This programme is implemented across the country.

- Co-location of Anganwadi Centers (AWCs): As envisaged in NEP 2020, one of the models to ensure universal access to high quality Early Childhood Care & Education consists of Anganwadis co-located schools having Grade 1. In this regard, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Women & Child Development has launched the “Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) with Schools” on 3rd September, 2025. As per UDISE+ 2024-25, there are 2,99,546 co-located AWCs in schools having Grade-I.
- NCERT has developed and published textbooks in 22 scheduled languages for Grades 1 to 3. The textbooks are available at NCERT’s website <https://ncert.nic.in>.
- The Jaadui Pitara (JP), a set of 53 play-based learning-teaching materials for ages 3-8 was launched on 20th February 2023. Available in 22 Indian languages and English, JP includes toys, puzzles, story cards, flashcards, and teacher handbooks. Its digital extension, the e-Jaadui Pitara, launched on 10th February 2024, offers multilingual stories, activities, songs in 22 Indian languages, and AI-based bots-Katha Sakhi, Teacher Tara, and Parent Tara-to support children, teachers, and parents. As envisaged in NEP 2020, these initiatives are an integral part of the foundational stage.
- Primers (launched in March, 2024) have been developed in 121 local languages for FLN in mother tongues spoken by populations of at least 10,000. Primers are available at <https://ncert.nic.in/primers.php?ln=en>.
