

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

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 5814**  
ANSWERED ON- 30.03.2026

**ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL MERGERS AND EXERCISES RATIONALIZATION**

5814. Smt. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made any assessment of school mergers and rationalisation exercises that have led to an increase in dropout rates, particularly among rural students and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the total number of Central Government and Centrally aided schools that have been shut down in the country as part of the rationalization policy aligned with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, State/UT wise;
- (c) the details of average increase in distance to school for students in merged/rationalised areas and whether any measures have been taken to mitigate adverse impacts on access and retention and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of enrolment and dropout rates for girls, boys and SC/ST/Minority students at primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels in the country during the last ten years, State/UT wise?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) & (b): Education is in the Concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of schools are under the domain of the respective State/UT Government. The opening, closing and integration of schools are within the purview of respective State Government and UT Administration, which are the appropriate Government under the RTE Act.

As per UDISE+, the All India dropout rate during the period 2023-24 and 2024-25 is as under, which shows reduction in dropout rate:

Year	Primary			Upper Primary			Secondary		
	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall
<b>2023-24</b>	1.7	2.1	1.9	5.3	5.2	5.2	12.6	15.5	14.1
<b>2024-25</b>	0	0.8	0.3	2.9	4.1	3.5	9.6	13.3	11.5

The number of sanctioned Kendriya Vidyalays (KVs) and Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) during the period of last two years have seen an increase of 142 and 28, respectively.

(c): The distance of schools for students is assessed from the Gross Access Ratio - which is total villages/habitations having school within specified distance norm in a year out of total villages/habitations in that year. Advancements have been made in improving universal access at all levels of school education as evidenced by Gross Access Ratio (GAR) given below:

Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
<b>2018-19</b>	97.15	96.49	88.24	65.05
<b>2024-25</b>	97.83	96.57	95.35	94.97

Under the centrally sponsored Samagra Shiksha scheme, financial assistance is provided to States and UTs for undertaking various activities for improving access, including opening/strengthening of new schools upto senior secondary level, construction of school buildings & additional classrooms, development/strengthening of school infrastructure in border areas under Vibrant Village Programme through the convergence of existing scheme of DOSEL, setting up, construction of hostels for PVTGs under PM-JANMAN, setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas, construction of hostels under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for unsaturated ST population, free uniforms to eligible children and free text books at elementary level, transport allowance and undertaking enrolment & retention drives. Special training for age-appropriate admission of out of school children and residential as well as non-residential training for older children, seasonal hostels / residential camps, special training centers at worksites, transport/ escort facility etc. are also supported to bring out of school children to the formal schooling system.

Since 2021-22, financial assistance upto Rs. 2000 per annum is also being provided for supporting Out of School Children including migrant children of age group of 16-19 years, belonging to socio economically disadvantaged groups, for completing their education through NIOS/SIOS, for accessing course materials and certification.

(d): The Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) developed by DOSEL collects data from all recognised schools. The data on different educational indicators over the years, State-wise is available on the portal <http://udiseplus.gov.in/#>. As per UDISE+ 2024-25, the enrolment in schools (all management types) is 24.69 crore and the All India dropout rate for SC and ST category is as under:

Social Category	Primary			Upper Primary			Secondary		
	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall	Girls	Boys	Overall
SC	0.5	1.1	0.8	4.2	5.2	4.7	11.5	15.9	13.7
ST	1.6	2.3	1.9	5.7	7.2	6.5	16	20.7	18.4

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