

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 103

ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026

Out-of-School Children Enrolled in NIOS

103. Shri Govind Makthappa Karjol:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the estimated number of out-of-school children in the country, particularly in the age group of 14–18 years, during each of the last five years, State/UT-wise, gender-wise and social category-wise, including Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC);
- (b) the details of the proposed initiative for mainstreaming out-of-school children through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) including the number of pilot districts identified, selection criteria, expected beneficiaries and the timeline for nationwide implementation;
- (c) whether the Government maintains data on children reintegrated into formal schools or enrolled through NIOS and State Open Schools during the last five years and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise and social category-wise;
- (d) the details of funds allocated, released and utilized under various schemes of the Government for identification, enrolment, retention and skill development of out-of-school children during the last five years, State/UT-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken to reduce school dropouts and achieve universal secondary education?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (e): NEP 2020 emphasizes universal access to education and reducing dropout rates at all levels by ensuring equitable access, improving retention, providing flexible learning opportunities and facilitating the re-enrolment of out-of-school children to achieve universal school education.

Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of schools fall under the purview of the State/UT Government. The States/UTs follow different approaches for preventing dropouts which are specific to different regions or communities based on various factors responsible for dropouts. The need for various interventions required to reduce drop out and ensure retention are worked out every year by the respective State/Union Territory and reflected in their Annual Work plan & Budget (AWP&B). Financial assistance is provided to States and UTs for implementation of AWP&B.

Under NEP 2020, NIOS caters to dropouts from the formal system through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) courses designed to improve mobility and employability. The data on children enrolled through NIOS during the last five years, State/UT-wise and social category wise is available at

https://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/notification/yr2026/Admissionsdata_NIOS.html

The Department of School Education and Literacy is implementing Samagra Shiksha, an integrated Centrally Sponsored Scheme for school education from pre-school to Class XII, aligned with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. The scheme aims to ensure equitable access to quality and inclusive education for all children while addressing their diverse backgrounds, multilingual needs and varying academic abilities.

Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to States and Union Territories for interventions aimed at improving access, equity, quality and retention in school education. These include opening and strengthening of schools, construction of additional classrooms and hostels, support for Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), provision of free textbooks and uniforms, transport facilities, ICT and digital initiatives, science laboratories, skill education, teacher education, remedial teaching and enrolment and retention drives.

Special emphasis is placed on reducing dropout rates and mainstreaming Out-of-School Children (OoSC) through age-appropriate admissions, special training programmes, residential facilities and support for completing education through open schooling systems such as NIOS and State Open Schools. Additional support is provided for Children with Special Needs (CwSN) through aids and appliances, teaching-learning materials and stipends for girls with disabilities.

The Government has also introduced initiatives such as the Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) for real-time monitoring of enrolment, migration and dropout trends, and the APAAR ID under the “One Nation, One Student ID” initiative for lifelong academic tracking of students. The PM POSHAN Scheme further supports enrolment, attendance and retention by providing nutritious mid-day meals to children in Balvatika and Classes I to VIII.

Bridging gender and social gaps in education remains a key objective of the scheme through interventions such as KGBVs, girls' hostels, self-defence training, gender-sensitive infrastructure and targeted support for disadvantaged groups. States and UTs are supported in implementing context-specific interventions through their Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWP&B) to achieve the NEP 2020 goal of universal access and 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio at the secondary level by 2030.
