

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The projects costing upto Rs.300 crore are approved by the Ministry of Railways after seeking in principle approval and comments of the Planning Commission. The projects costing above Rs.300 crores are considered by Expanded Railway Board (EBR) which includes Secretary (Planning Commission), Secretary (Department of Expenditure) and Secretary (Programme Implementation) as members besides Railway Board. The recommendations of EBR are considered and processed by the Ministry of Railways. Thereafter, Ministry of Railways submits the proposals including recommendations of EBR and comments of the concerned Ministries and Planning Commission for approval of the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI). After the approval of the CCI the project proposals are taken up for implementation by the Ministry of Railways for which Budget and Time-frame are always fixed. However, the progress of implementation of some projects get hampered due to non-availability of sufficient resources, security problems, administrative delays in getting statutory clearances and contractual failures etc., which contribute in prolonging the period of completion of the projects.

Universalization of school education

1787. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has recently acknowledged to State Governments that funds provided under plan scheme are inadequate for achieving the goal of universalizing school education;

(b) if so, whether the Planning Commission has now asked States to put in place a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for schools;

(c) if so, whether any framework for the PPP for schools has been prepared; and

(d) if so, the modalities worked out for the proper implementation of the PPP scheme for schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (d) School education consists of various stages viz. Primary (Class I-V), Upper primary (Class VI-VIII), Secondary (Class IX and X) and Higher Secondary (Class XI and XII). Elementary Education, combines Primary and Upper primary education (Class I to VIII). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act, 2009) was notified on 27th August, 2009. The RTE Act which has become operative with effect from 1st April 2010 provides the legislative framework for Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the principal programme for UEE in the country. The Eleventh Plan Central

outlay under SSA is Rs. 71,000 crore. The Government had already harmonized SSA vision, strategies and norms with the RTE mandate and SSA norms have been revised. The planned investment for implementation of RTE harmonized SSA for the period of five years from 2010-11 to 2014-15 is Rs. 2.31 lakh crore. The Thirteenth Finance Commission has provided Rs. 24,068 crore to the States for Elementary Education. The Government has approved requirement of additional funds of Rs. 2,07,165 crore which will be shared between Centre and the States in the ratio of 65:35 (90:10 ratio for NE States). The Government is committed to implement RTE in partnership with the States and requisite funds will be made available in the Annual Plans in Central and State Sectors.

The success of SSA in reducing the number of out of school children and achieving large scale enrollments in Elementary Education has thrown up challenge of expanding access to Secondary Education. The stage is thus set for Universalisation of Secondary Education. The GOI has launched a new scheme viz. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) with the goal of making secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group 15-16 years (Classes IX and X). The objectives of RMSA are: (i) to achieve a GER of 75% for classes IX-X within 5 years by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation, (ii) to improve quality of education imparted at secondary level through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, (iii) to remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, (iv) universal access to secondary level education by 2017, i.e., by the end of Twelfth Five Year Plan, and (v) universal retention by 2020.

The Prime Minister had announced setting up of 6000 Model Schools to provide quality education to talented rural children at the block level at the rate of one school per block. These will be pace setting schools as benchmark of excellence. The Government of India has already approved setting up of 3500 Model Schools to be fully funded by the Government sector in partnership with the States in Educationally Backward Blocks of the country. The remaining 2500 Models Schools are proposed to be set up in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode in other blocks. The Government has already accorded 'in principle' approval for setting up of Model Schools in PPP mode and the modalities for which are to be worked out by the Ministry of HRD in consultation with the Planning Commission and other stakeholders. The Ministry of HRD has already placed some of the key elements of Models Schools on its official web-site for facilitating wider dissemination and consultation process. Various models of PPP have been under consideration and these have been discussed under different forums including CAGE, State Ministers' Conference, State Secretaries Meetings, Round Table on School Education etc. A sub-group of the Round Table had also deliberated on PPP Model Schools and submitted a report to the Ministry of HRD.