

Classes	2010-11 (Provisional)		
	Boys	Girls	Total
I-V	28.7	25.1	27.0
I-X	50.4	47.9	49.3

The dropout rates are not maintained separately for rural and urban areas.

(c) and (d) The incidence of high dropout rate may be attributed to inadequate school infrastructure and facilities, adverse pupil teacher ratio, children engaged in household or other kinds of work, seasonal migration etc. The Government has been making consistent progress in meeting the goals of Universal Elementary Education through implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, which became operational with effect from 1st April, 2010, provides that every child in the 6 to 14 age-group shall have a right to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education. The SSA Framework of Implementation has been revised to correspond with the provisions of the RTE Act 2009 and SSA is being implemented in accordance with the norms and standards of the RTE Act to enhance enrolment and retention of children and to bridge gender gaps in elementary education. A multi-pronged approach has been adopted for reducing dropout rates. This includes; *inter-alia* strengthening of school infrastructure and facilities, residential hostel buildings for children in habitations not covered by regular schools, provisioning for additional teachers, regular training of teachers, provision for text books and uniforms to children. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme provides for setting up of residential upper primary schools for girls. Mid Day Meal Scheme is also being implemented with a view to enhance enrolment and retention of children in school. Further, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan which has been launched for universal access to secondary education, aims at removing gender and socio-economic disparities in access to education.

Price hike in onion

†109. SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that there has been a sharp increase in the prices of the onions recently;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps being taken by Government to control the prices of the onions;
- (d) whether government is contemplating to impose a ban on the export of the onions to control the prices of the onions; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR) : (a) and (b) Monthly Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (Base Year 2004-05=100) for onion for the period January, 2012 to January, 2013 indicates that there is a mixed trend from January, 2012 to September, 2012 thereafter a sharp increase from October, 2012 to January, 2013. a statement showing variations in the monthly WPI of onion over the last one year is given below:

Monthly WPI for Onion	
Month	Onion
January, 12	151.0
February, 12	133.8
March, 12	136.0
April, 12	139.6
May, 12	138.2
June, 12	157.9
July, 12	180.7
August, 12	194.1
September, 12	194.0
October, 12	210.2
November, 12	259.8
December, 12	304.8
January, 13	319.4

Prices of vegetables such as onion are mainly governed by the market forces of demand and supply, cost of transportation, cost of storage and rising demand

due to increasing income, urbanization etc. the untimely rains in different onion growing areas, which has affected the crop and its supply chain, has contributed to sharp increase in its prices.

(c) Government has launched the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) from 2005-06 for holistic development of horticulture sector. Under NHM, financial assistance is provided for taking up various activities relating to horticulture crops including onion. Government has also launched a scheme on Vegetables Initiative for Urban Clusters (VIUC) during 2011-12 within the overall Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) Scheme.

The Scheme cover all aspects relating to formation of farmer's association/ groups, training/capacity building of farmers, linking farmers group with aggregators/ markets, vegetable production under supply to urban centers starting from planting material to marketing to retail level.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal to ban export of onion.

Delayed railway projects

110. SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of railway projects are running behind schedule resulting in cost escalation;

(b) if so, the details of such projects delayed for more than ten years along with the cost escalation; and

(c) the steps taken by Railways to complete these projects at an early date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.J. SURYA PRAKASH REDDY): (a) to (c) As on 01.04.2012, Railways have 347 ongoing projects under New Lines, Gauge Conversions and Doubling having a throw forward of about Rs. 1.47 Lakh Crore with limited availability of resources. As a result, funds are thinly spread out thus prolonging period of completion.

Thin spread of resources causes delay in completion of projects and cost also get escalated due to inflation during intervening period. The extra expenditure being incurred by Railways cannot be quantified in real terms as escalation depends on various factors every year. Projects also get delayed due to delay in land acquisition and forestry clearance, adverse law and order conditions, increase in price of construction materials, failure of contracts etc.