

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

**RAJYA SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2260**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2022**

**Effect of COVID pandemic on school education**

2260 **Shri Jawhar Sircar:**

Will the Minister of **EDUCATION** be pleased to state:

- (a) Government's overall estimate of the devastation caused by the COVID pandemic on school education since March 25, 2020;
- (b) whether Government agrees that almost two full academic years have been affected most adversely and whether there is hope or plan to make up for the lost parts of the curriculum and teaching;
- (c) what percentage of primary and secondary school students in urban and rural areas are estimated to have access to the internet at all; and
- (d) whether Government is planning to improve the position for future emergencies and supplementing normal teaching?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)**

(a) & (b) Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. The spread of COVID-19 pandemic has impacted school education. Schools in States and Union Territories (UT) were closed as a precautionary measure to protect the students from Novel COVID-19 (Corona) virus. This has interrupted the learning of students from pre- school to grade 12. With a view of addressing the issues related to gaps and/or loss of learning among students, during and after the lockdown, National Council of Education Research & Training (NCERT) has prepared 'Alternative Academic Calendar' which is a Week-wise learning plan for grades 1 to 12. It maps the topics/themes with the learning outcomes & facilitates teachers/parents to assess the progress in students' learning in a variety of ways. Also links for e-resources have been provided for those learners who have access to the internet. NCERT has also developed bridge course modules for out-of-school children including various activities which are helpful for bridging the learning gaps and the States/UTs have also been requested to prepare and implement School Readiness Module/Bridge Course in classrooms for initial one or two months for each grade. In addition the Department vide letter dated 4th May, 2021 has shared a comprehensive Covid Action Plan with States/UTs and other stakeholders for mitigating the loss of learning.

A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy called "National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)" has been launched by the Ministry of Education (MoE) on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. It lays down priorities and actionable agendas for States/UTs to achieve the goal of proficiency in

foundational literacy and numeracy for every child by grade 3. Vidya Pravesh module has been launched for class 1 students. This is a play based 3 months school preparation program for children entering in Class I.

In addition, a comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes the following components:

- DIKSHA the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs: and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades (one nation, one digital platform)
- One earmarked Swayam Prabha TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (one class, one channel)
- Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani
- Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube

Where the digital facility (mobile device/ DTH television) is not available, Ministry of Education has taken many initiatives like Community Radio Stations and a podcast called Shiksha Vani of CBSE, Textbooks, worksheet supplied to residence of learners, Handbook on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and community/mohalla classes. Innovation Funds under Samagra Shiksha have been used to set up mobile school, virtual studios, virtual class rooms in schools, Continuous Learning Plan (CLP), pre-loaded tablets etc. in various states and UTs in remote/rural areas where online classes are difficult. Further, in order to provide continuous professional development opportunities to the teachers at the elementary and secondary level, this Department launched the NISHTHA online training programme using DIKSHA platform in October 2020.

(c) & (d) The Government has taken various steps to provide online education amidst COVID-19 pandemic. These include PRAGYATA Guidelines on various modes of digital education including online mode that depends more on availability of internet, partially online mode that utilizes the blended approach of digital technology and other offline activities, partial and offline mode that utilizes television and radio as a major medium of instruction of education. The guidelines can be accessed at:

[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf)

The state governments have been asked to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of all students for providing them with the digital access required for learning digitally. In order to enable online education benefit to the children of every category and teachers, Learning Enhancement Guidelines have been issued. The guidelines can be accessed at:

[https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/Learning\\_Enhancement\\_0.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Learning_Enhancement_0.pdf)

A comprehensive learning recovery plan (LRP) has been issued on 01.02.2022 to all States/UTs to provide a multipronged & holistic approach to ensure that children received suitable support. Under this, support is provided to States/UTs for various interventions including Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP), Teacher Resource Package (TRP), Oral Reading Fluency Study (ORF), ICT facility to Block Resource Centres (BRCs) Strengthening of Clusters Resource Centres (CRCs).

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