

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

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 97
ANSWERED ON 31/07/2024

100 percent GER at secondary level

97 # DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI:

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

- (a) whether Government has worked on the recommendations of NEP 2020 to achieve 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the secondary level by 2030;
- (b) if so, the details of the steps taken under these recommendations and their progress; and
- (c) the details of the plans to achieve these targets?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 97 FOR REPLY ON 31.07.2024 ASKED BY DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING 100 PERCENT GER AT SECONDARY LEVEL

(a) to (c): The Para 3.1 of NEP 2020 States that *“One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and are attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Grade 12.”*

The Policy mentions the importance of ensuring access to education for all children and sets an ambitious target for improving the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at various levels of education. In order to achieve this objective of the policy, concerted efforts are being made in the following areas of School Education that cumulatively contribute towards achieving the goal of 100% GER:

- Foundational literacy and numeracy
- Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters
- National Curriculum Framework: Foundational Stage
- National Curriculum Framework-School Education
- Skilling
- National Credit Framework (NCrF)
- Digital technology
- APAAR ID
- Samagra Shiksha
- Convergence with other Ministries for infrastructure development
- Re-established credibility of Government schools-PM SHRI
- Improving access through PM E-Vidya channels and DIKSHA
- Teacher training
- Public-private partnership
- Equity and Inclusion-Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) and PM JANMAN
- Assessment
- PM POSHAN

The major initiatives taken to implement the objectives of the policy in the above-mentioned areas are given below:

- 1. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** Investing at all stages of school education beginning from early years is imperative in achieving the desired outcome in terms of GER within the given timeline. Enhancing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

lays a strong foundation for the students and ensure continuation of their schooling, which in turn contributes to a higher GER for secondary education in the year 2030.

Para 2.2 of NEP 2020 States that: *“Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children will thus become an urgent national mission, with immediate measures to be taken on many fronts and with clear goals that will be attained in the short term (including that every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3). The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. **The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is first achieved.** To this end, a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on priority.....”*

Aimed at improving the quality of FLN, the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education launched a National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) on 5th July 2021, for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27. This Mission, launched under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha, focusses on providing access and retaining children in foundational years of schooling; teacher capacity building; development of high quality and diversified Student and Teacher Resources/Learning Materials; and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes.

Vidya Pravesh, another step taken towards attaining 100 % GER, is a school preparation module, a Three-month Play-based School Preparation Programme for Grade-I Children has been developed as per the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The purpose is to help teachers ensure that all children are exposed to a warm and welcoming environment when they enter Grade I, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to their smooth transition to school. The play-based pedagogy is a significant aspect of the programme that plays a vital role in creating a joyful and stress-free environment for children to learn, and also in addressing the learning needs of children with special needs or disabilities (Divyang). Focus is also given on learning in mother tongue or home language and allowing as many languages as children bring to the classroom, including sign language. The module is essentially around 12 weeks of developmentally appropriate instruction for the children entering Grade I to bolster a child's pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, cognitive and social skills. Since 2022-23, all states/UTs are implementing Vidya Pravesh. In 2023-24, 1,13,00,053 students from 8,46,548 schools participated across States/UTs.

- 2. Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters:** A challenge is posed by the large number of small, isolated schools across India many of which have fewer than 30 students, making it difficult to efficiently deploy teachers and resources.

The multiple categories of schools - Primary (1-5), Upper primary (1-8), Upper primary (6-8), Secondary (1-10), Secondary (6-10), Secondary (9-10), Higher Secondary (1-12), Higher Secondary (6-12), Higher Secondary (9-12), Higher Secondary (11-12) lead to students transitioning between too many levels, which adds to the dropout amongst students, especially girls.

The National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the need for rationalizing and optimizing resources in the education sector to ensure efficient and effective delivery of education services. As per UDISE+ 2021-22, more than one-third of all government schools in India enroll fewer than 50 students, indicating the prevalence of small schools within the public education system. On average, government schools in India

have enrolments of 134 students, significantly lower than the average enrolment of 268 students in private schools.

Another major challenge that is grappling the system is the frequent student transitions between different school categories leading to 36 lakh (29%) dropouts, particularly from Primary to Upper Primary and Secondary levels. Students often seek Higher Secondary (HS) schools and schools offering classes 1-12 retain students effectively. Presently, 19 states/UTs have more than 10 categories of schools even though there is no specific need of creation of 5 different categories in small states/UTs like Lakshadweep, and other small states/UTs. Furthermore, states with a higher concentration of small schools tend to face greater infrastructure deficits, inadequate instructional materials, fewer teachers per grade, and higher dropout rates in primary schools.

To address this, the policy recommends the establishment of school complexes or clusters - groups of nearby schools to serve as the basic unit of governance and service delivery. The goals are to achieve economies of scale, enable sharing of resources and facilities, foster collaborative learning, and improve monitoring and support.

Towards this end, a mapping exercise has been initiated through a Pilot programme (one district in each state/UT) to assess the feasibility and potential challenges in clustering the schools. The aim is to identify a bigger school within the periphery of a few smaller schools for re-organization so that these students get the benefit of an optimised and aspirational infrastructure such as additional Classrooms, Computer Labs, STEM Labs etc.

- 3. National Curriculum Framework: Foundational Stage:** In order to have a higher GER focus also needs to be laid on improving the quality of the curriculum transacted.

NEP 2020 aims to promote holistic development of an individual and aims to make high quality education accessible to everyone. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) creates a roadmap for the education system to make the NEP's vision and spirit a reality. NCF FS launched on 20th October, 2022, is the first ever integrated Curriculum Framework for children between ages 3-8 in India. It is a direct outcome of the 5+3+3+4 'curricular and pedagogical' structure that NEP 2020 has come out with for School Education. Following which, Jaadui Pitara: Learning Teaching Material (Jaadui Pitara) based on NCF FS was launched on 20th Feb, 2023. It is a play-based learning teaching material tailored for children between the age group of 3 to 8 years. It has been developed as an exemplar of content needed in any school for the Foundational Stage. To accelerate and amplify the awareness, reach, and impact of the transformative idea of Jaadui Pitara as a symbol of NCF-FS, e-Jaadui Pitara was released for increasing awareness of Jaadui Pitara among teachers, parents and communities and also democratising access to content to overcome the limitations of the physical Jaadui Pitara.

National Curriculum Framework-School Education: The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) is the curriculum framework for the 5+3+3+4 design of schooling as proposed by the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). It also recommended the formulation of a new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) to respond to this four-stage school design. The entire curriculum framework for all the four stages – Foundational Stage, Preparatory Stage, Middle Stage, and Secondary Stage – has been released.

- 4. Skilling :** Skill education by and large impacts enhancing the GER and help in achieving the desired 100% target by the year 2030.

The following initiatives has been taken:

- **Integration of Vocational Education:** By introducing vocational training from an early stage, it ensures that students gain practical skills alongside academic knowledge. This approach helps in:
 - Reducing Dropout Rates: Students are less likely to drop out if they see clear pathways to employment and skill development.
 - Making Education Relevant: Aligning education with market needs makes it more attractive and valuable to students.
- **Flexible Learning Paths:** The NEP supports flexible learning paths that allow students to choose subjects and skills according to their interests and career goals. This flexibility:
 - Encourages Participation: Students can pursue education and skill development that align with their career aspirations, increasing engagement and enrollment.
 - Facilitates Lifelong Learning: Continuous skill enhancement throughout a person's life is promoted, supporting ongoing educational engagement.
- **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF):** The NSQF is a framework for aligning vocational education and training with industry requirements. NEP 2020 advocates for its effective implementation:
 - Standardised Skills: Ensures that the skills being taught are standardised and recognized across various sectors.
 - Better Job Matching: Helps in aligning educational outcomes with job market needs, improving employability and reducing skill gaps.
- **Career Counseling and Guidance:** The NEP stresses the need for career counselling and guidance services in schools, which helps in
 - Informed Choices: Students are better equipped to make informed decisions about their educational and career paths, which can increase their motivation to stay in school.
 - Skill Alignment: Helps students understand how their education and skills align with career opportunities, enhancing their commitment to education.
- **Collaboration with Industry:** Encourages partnerships with industries to create curricula that meet real-world needs, making education more relevant and attractive.
- **Skill Development Centers:** Establishing centers focused on skill development at various institutions helps in equipping students with practical skills.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aims to reform the education system comprehensively, including a strong focus on skill education. It lays down that in the Foundational and Preparatory Stages, multiple capacities developed through play and other activities, subsequently helps in selecting useful skills/vocations. These capacities are termed pre-Skill capacities. In the Middle Stage, exposure to a wide range of work given to students equip them to achieve capacities (including specific skills) in a vocation of their choice in the Secondary Stage and help them progress towards gainful employment and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

By integrating these aspects into the education system, NEP 2020 aims to enhance the quality and relevance of education, thereby contributing to achieving 100% GER in India. The emphasis on skill development ensures that education is not just about theoretical knowledge but also about preparing students for practical, real-world challenges.

5. **National Credit Framework (NCrF):** NCrF is a comprehensive credit framework encompassing elementary, school, higher, and vocational education & training, integrating creditization of learning in various dimensions i.e. academics, vocational

skills and experiential learning including relevant experience and proficiency/professional levels acquired. The NCrF provides for creditization of all learning and assignment, accumulation, storage, transfer & redemption of credits, subject to assessment; removes distinction and establishes academic equivalence between vocational & general education while enabling mobility within & between them. NCrF is an enabling framework for all regulatory organizations and autonomous institutions.

Taking the vision of the NEP, 2020, NCrF enables the integration of academic and vocational domains to ensure flexibility and mobility between the two. NCrF also provides for numerous options for further progression of students and inter-mingling of school and higher education with vocational education and experiential learning, thus mainstreaming skilling and vocational education. NCrF further envisions that student who have dropped out of the mainstream education re-enter the education ecosystem.

- 6. Digital Technology:** Several digital initiatives have been introduced over the last few years which have enabled to set up mechanisms to reach out to students from all geographical regions.

NEP mentions the integral role of technology and its integration with education. It elaborates on technology integration for improving quality and processes etc. Para 23.1 of NEP 2020 states that *“India is a global leader in information and communication technology and in other cutting-edge domains, such as space. The Digital India Campaign is helping to transform the entire nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. While education will play a critical role in this transformation, technology itself will play an important role in the improvement of educational processes and outcomes; thus, the relationship between technology and education at all levels is bidirectional.”*

To manifest this in practice, Vidya Samiksha Kendra(VSK), one such major initiative established as a super-connector of systemic school education data for the country, enables distributed observability & actionability across policies, programs and schemes.’ It aims to enable integrated and shared 'data seeing' for amplifying data-driven decision making and actioning by key stakeholders for academic and administrative activities, thereby improving learning outcomes. It enables The relevant stakeholders to track the progress of various educational programs under one roof.

It aims to empower: ‘Ability to see’ by different stakeholders on what is going on, ability to make sense of what is working/ what is not and ability to amplify actions through timely, coordinated efforts based on data and insights. It enables all the key stakeholders towards data driven decision making, students to learn better, officers to decide better and teachers to teach better. It further assists in smooth interoperability between the National and State/UTs and also between Autonomous Bodies (ABs) Vidya Samiksha Kendras through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces).

Vidya Samiksha Kendra has data from all the key schemes of DoSEL, MoE such as; Samagra Shiksha, PM Shri, Nipun Bharat, PM Poshan, UDISE+, DIKSHA, NAS etc. The foundation layer of Vidya Samiksha Kendra is based on 6A Framework i.e. Attendance, Assessment, Adaptive Learning, Administration, Accreditation and AI nudges.

29 States/UTs have operational VSK. VSK at CBSE has been launched. Further, 6 States have also been connected to the VSK through APIs. Through leveraging a data driven approach the initiative aims to improve decision making, enable targeted interventions, delivery and outcomes and thereby playing a crucial role in supporting Government efforts towards improved outcomes.

- 7. Creation of Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR):** The Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L) through Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) Management Information System is collecting individual student wise data along with Aadhaar Number on voluntary basis w.e.f. 2022-23. The information collected in UDISE+ is further being leveraged to generate a unique and permanent lifelong 12-digit ID to each student which is known as “APAAR ID”.

The Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) is thus an education registry that provides a framework to identify and provide unique credentials to individuals and entities. This enables ease of access by allowing authenticated learners/students to enroll and avail various services and benefits seamlessly vis-a-vis pursuing old institutional records, that sometimes date even years after leaving the school which takes significant time & effort.

For achieving 100% GER at Secondary level, APAAR Id helps through the following ways:

- Accurate data collection: Aadhaar-based digital profiles of all children aged 13-17 years helps identify out-of-school children and plan targeted interventions to enroll them.
- Streamlined admissions: Online/biometric verification of Aadhaar at admission prevents fake enrollments. It also eases admission of migrants in neighbourhood schools.
- Attendance tracking: Digital attendance using Aadhaar fingerprints in schools monitors regularity and identifies early absenteeism issues for action.
- Direct benefits transfer: Aadhaar linking to scholarships, mid-day meals, transportation schemes ensures benefits reach enrolled children, incentivizing attendance.
- Tracking transition rates: It helps collect Aadhaar of elementary graduates to monitor their secondary enrollment/continuation in the same academic year and also in tracking the drop outs.
- Individual learning support: Online access to curriculum, quizzes etc. facilitates personalised attention for at-risk learners.
- Vocational guidance: Skills profiling using Aadhaar helps guide students into formal vocational streams as an alternative secondary education option.
- Promote Lifelong learning: The creation of these IDs enables maintenance of educational records of students that can be accessed by them for smooth academic trajectory.
- It also helps in planning of institutions based on migration/drop out trends.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (Para 3.3) emphasises on goals such as achievement of “universal participation in school by carefully tracking students, as well as their learning levels, in order to ensure that they (a) are enrolled in and attending school and (b) have suitable opportunities to catch up and re-enter school in case they have fallen behind or dropped out.”

- 8. Samagra Shiksha:** Samagra Shiksha, a comprehensive school education program launched by the Government of India treats school education as a continuum without segmentation from pre-school to Class 12.

The NEP 2020 calls for concerted national effort to be made to ensure universal access and afford the opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational education - from pre-school to Class 12.

Para 3.2 of NEP 2020 states *“There are two overall initiatives that will be undertaken to bring children who have dropped out back to school and to prevent further children from dropping out. The first is to provide effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12. Besides providing regular trained teachers at each stage, special care shall be taken to ensure that no school remains deficient on infrastructure support.....”*

With an objective to improve educational access and quality, which contributes to achieving a higher Gross Enrollment Ratio and moving towards universal education in India, the centrally sponsored scheme Samagra Shiksha was introduced which subsumes the three previous schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).

Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12. The program aims to improve access, equity, and quality of education and has been aligned with the recommendations of NEP 2020 as revamped **Samagra Shiksha**. One of the key goals of Samagra Shiksha is to improve access and achieve a 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) across all levels of school education. The scheme focuses on the following aspects to enhance quality, access and equity for increasing enrolment:

- **Infrastructure development:** Samagra Shiksha program provides funding for the construction of new schools, additional classrooms, and the improvement of existing school infrastructure to ensure that all children have access to a nearby school. Additionally special focus is laid on establishment of ICT labs, smart classrooms, skill labs, tinkering labs, STEM labs, integrated science lab etc.
 - **Provisions for out-of-school children:** Samagra Shiksha focuses on identifying and enrolling out-of-school children, including those from marginalised communities, and providing them with targeted interventions to facilitate their mainstreaming into the education system.
 - **Transport and residential facilities:** The program supports the provision of safe and accessible transport, as well as residential facilities, to enable children from remote and disadvantaged areas to attend school regularly.
 - **Partnerships and community engagement:** Samagra Shiksha encourages partnerships with various stakeholders, including local communities, to ensure that the program is responsive to the needs of the community and enhances community ownership of the education system.
 - **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Inclusive education for children with special needs to education is available to all, contributing to higher GER.
 - **Remote and Rural Areas:** Special measures are taken to provide quality education in underserved areas, ensuring broader participation.
9. **Convergence with other Ministries for infrastructure development:** The States/UTs have been requested in various forums including Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting, review PABs for filling up the gaps in school infrastructure. They have further been advised to converge the various initiatives of Samagra Shiksha between Ministry of Education, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Housing & urban Development and Department of Drinking water and sanitation to rejuvenate basic infrastructure and overall cleanliness of Government schools' with the objective of filling up infrastructure gaps in government schools. Provision and maintenance of basic school infrastructure facilities like electricity, toilets, drinking water, boundary wall, white-wash, furniture and minor repairs are very

essential to bring back out of school children, improve student attendance, ensure retention and minimise drop-out rate among marginalised sections.

- 10. PM SHRI Schools:** Keeping in view this vision of the NEP 2020 and to ensure better enrollment, efforts have been taken to strengthen the existing government schools through the PM SHRI scheme. The PM SHRI Schools aim to improve the quality of existing schools.

Para 3.2 of NEP 2020 states that “..... *The credibility of Government schools shall be re-established and this will be attained by upgrading and enlarging the schools that already exist, building additional quality schools in areas where they do not exist, and providing safe and practical conveyances and/or hostels, especially for the girl children, so that all children have the opportunity to attend a quality school and learn at the appropriate level.....*”

This scheme recommends preparing around 14500 PM SHRI Schools in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, a wide range of learning experiences are offered, good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. These schools are being developed as vibrant schools focusing on all round development of children. These schools focus not only on cognitive development, but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st century skills. It is a centrally sponsored scheme which includes all categories of schools i.e. Primary, Elementary, Secondary and Senior Secondary school. The Scheme is proposed to be implemented over a period of 5 years w.e.f 2022-23 to 2026-27. PM SHRI Schools have been conceived as exemplar schools to hand hold the other schools in the region and establishing more such schools.

- 11. Improving access through PM E-Vidya channels and DIKSHA:** A comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA was launched which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education **benefitting nearly 25 crore school going children across the country. A total of 200 PM eVidya channels have been launched in different regional languages.**

DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) was formally launched by the Hon'ble Vice President of India on 5th September 2017 for Students, Teachers, and Parents. **DIKSHA can be accessed by learners and teachers across the country and currently supports 36 Indian languages.** Each State/UT leverages the DIKSHA platform in its own way, as it has the freedom and choice to use the varied capabilities and solutions of the platform to design and run programs for teachers, learners and administrators. DIKSHA policies and tools make it possible for the education ecosystem (educationist, experts, organisations, institutions - government, autonomous institutions, non-govt and private organisations) to participate, contribute and leverage a common platform to achieve learning goals at scale for the country. Under the PM eVidya initiative DIKSHA has been declared as 'One Nation, One Digital Platform'.

- 12. Teacher training:** Teachers truly shape the future of our children and, therefore the quality of our teachers is directly related to the quality of learning experiences provided to the students. The NEP 2020 proposes 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development amongst teachers to help them to stay adept with the emerging trends in teaching and learning and focus on developing skills of teachers to improve teaching-learning process through programs like National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA). NISHTHA was initially launched on 21st August, 2019 covering teachers at the elementary level. It is an integrated teacher

training programme to equip teachers/head teachers to foster critical thinking among students and to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes. In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and in order to provide continuous learning opportunities to the teachers, an online version using DIKSHA platform was launched on 6th October, 2021.

13. Public-private partnership: In alignment with the collaborating with NGOs, community to set up more schools and increased community participation, the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to introduce and bring about a transformative change across all levels of education in India, including through active involvement of the community as well as the philanthropic sector in the attainment of its goals and objectives. **The NEP, 2020, in different chapters, lays emphasis on volunteer participation. Community participation plays a vital role in identification and integration of Out of School Children into mainstream education. This in turn helps improve enrollment and move closer towards the goals set by NEP 2020. Towards this effort to connect the Government and Government aided schools through a community/volunteer management program, the Department has revamped Vidyanjali portal which aims to help the community/volunteers interact and connect directly with schools of their choice to share their knowledge and skills as well as contribute in the form of assets/material/equipment.** Upon the expression of interest by a volunteer, the school authorities assesses the suitability of the volunteer for the service/activity and/or the specifications of the assets/material/equipment in accordance with the procedure as set out in these guidelines. Since its inception on 7th September, 2021 till June, 2024, 7,51,599 Govt. and Govt aided schools have onboarded and 4,61,322 volunteers have registered on the Vidyanjali portal impacting approximately 1,46,58,937 children.

14. Access and Inclusion: Access and inclusion are critical areas for ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, can fully participate in seeking educational opportunities. For a country like India, with a diverse population and varying regional resources, this becomes particularly important. Hence the Ministry, in order to reach 100% GER has initiated the following steps to ensure access and inclusion:

- a. **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV):** Under Samagra Shiksha, there is a provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). KGBVs are residential schools from class VI to XII for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, Minority and Below Poverty Line (BPL). The KGBVs are set up in Educationally Backward Blocks.

The objective behind establishing KGBVs is to ensure access and quality education to girls from disadvantaged groups by setting up residential schools and to reduce gender gaps at all levels of school education. Target Group for KGBVs is the Girls in the age group of 10-18 years aspiring to study in classes VI to XII belonging to SC, ST, OBC, Minority communities and BPL families.

- b. **PM JANMAN:** Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) aims to cover 75 PVTG communities residing in 18 States and 1 UT. Under Samagra Shiksha in respect of PM JANMAN, the Ministry of Education, Department of School Education & Literacy has sanctioned 100 hostels towards the target of education of PVTG students to improve access of such communities to quality education.

15. Assessment: Assessment helps achieve 100% GER by identifying educational gaps, tailoring interventions to meet diverse needs, and tracking progress. It ensures that resources are effectively allocated, supports targeted support for at-risk groups, and

monitors the effectiveness of policies, thereby enhancing overall educational access and quality.

National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) has been set up in NCERT as an independent constituent unit on 8th Feb, 2023, to fulfil the basic objectives of setting norms, standards, guidelines and implement activities related to student assessment along with other tasks as mandated by Para 4.41 of NEP-2020. There are four major areas of focus for PARAKH: Capacity Development in Competency Based Assessment, Large-Scale Achievement Survey, Equivalence of School Boards, Holistic Progress Cards for the Foundational, Preparational, Middle and Secondary Stages.

16. Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) is one of the foremost rights based centrally sponsored scheme implemented in partnership with the States and UTs. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of PM POSHAN Scheme in schools for the five-year period from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The overall responsibility for smooth functioning of the scheme including providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

About 11.63 crore students studying in more than 10.67 lakh Government and Government-aided schools are covered under the PM POSHAN Scheme. The budget allocation for 2024-25 is Rs. 12467.39 crore and 25.33 lakh MT Foodgrains is allocated to States & UTs for the FY. Central Government also bears the subsidy of about Rs 9000 crore towards provision of foodgrains through Dept. of Food & Public Distribution.

The Primary objectives of the Scheme are to improve the nutritional status of the students, to encourage them to attend classes more regularly and to help them concentrate better on learning activities.
