

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

STANDARD OF PRIMARY EDUCATIONNew Delhi, March 03rd, 2016

The Central Government has taken several steps to improve the quality of primary education.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conduct periodic national surveys of learning achievement of children in classes – III and V of the primary stage. Four rounds of National Achievement Surveys (NAS) have been conducted so far for class V whereas three rounds have been conducted for class III. These reveal improvement in learning achievement levels of pupils, in various subjects.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the State Governments and UT Administrations are supported on several interventions to improve teaching standards, including regular in-service teachers’ training, induction training for newly recruited teachers, training of all untrained teachers to acquire professional qualifications through Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode, recruitment of additional teachers for better pupil-teacher ratios, academic support for teachers through block and cluster resource centres, continuous and comprehensive evaluation system to equip the teacher to measure pupil performance and provide remedial action wherever required, and teacher and school grants for development of appropriate teaching-learning materials, etc.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 specifies statutory duties and responsibilities of teachers and lays down the minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in elementary schools.

The Central Government through SSA has supported States/UTs on early grade reading, writing & comprehension, and early Mathematics programmes through a sub-programme namely ‘Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat’ in classes I and II.

Further the Government has launched ‘Rashtriya Aavishkar Abhiyan’ (RAA) programme on 09.07.2015, inter alia, as a sub-component of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), to motivate and engage children of the age group from 6-18 years in Science, Mathematics and Technology through observation, experimentation, inference drawing, model building, etc. both through inside and outside classroom activities.

The Central Government has launched the ‘Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching’ in December, 2014 with a vision to comprehensively address all issues related to teachers, teaching, teacher preparation, professional development, curriculum design, research in pedagogy and developing effective pedagogy.

A World Bank Report on “Student Learning in South Asia – Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Priorities”, in 2014, highlights that South Asia has made considerable progress in improving access to education but faces a major quality challenge in primary and secondary education. The Report emphasises on investing in education quality and that policies to improve student learning outcomes should be embedded within a larger agenda of inclusive growth and governance reform. For India specifically, the report points out that both Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 have led to impressive increases in enrolment, school infrastructure, provision of trained teachers, free textbooks and ensuring access to elementary schools even in rural areas. The Report points out that overall student achievement is low and the policies to promote equity in education need to focus on reducing the large and growing learning gaps between poor and better-off children.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2014 brought out annually by “Pratham”, a non-governmental organisation has expressed concern regarding learning levels of children in English reading and Mathematics at elementary level. It also presents certain positive findings, including the fact that 96% of children in the 6 to 14 age group are enrolled in schools in rural areas and that the percentage of out-of-school children in the 6-14 age group is at 3.3% in 2014, the same as the figure last year. It has also found steady improvement in school infrastructure.

As per UNESCO EFA global Monitoring Report- 2015 India made marked progress, increasing its net enrolment ratio significantly as GNP per capita improved, suggesting a more equitable distribution of economic gains.

This information was given by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani today in a written reply to a Rajya Sabha question.

GG/RT/DS/RK/PRIMARY EDUCATION