

Steps taken by the Government to promote gender equality in education

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The Department of School Education and Literacy is implementing an Integrated Centrally Sponsored Scheme for School Education- Samagra Shiksha from 2018-19. The scheme has been redesigned and aligned with the recommendations of the National Education Policy, 2020. It aims to ensure that all children, from pre-school to class 12, have access to quality education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment which should take care of their diverse background, multilingual needs, different academic abilities and make them active participants in the learning process. The major features of the Scheme are: (i) Support States and UTs in implementing the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020); (ii) Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009; (iii) Focus on Early Childhood Care and Education; (iv) Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy; (v) Thrust on Holistic, Integrated, Inclusive and activity based Curriculum and Pedagogy to impart 21st century skills among the students; (vi) Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students; (vii) Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education; (viii) Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education; (ix) Strengthening and up-gradation of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/State Institutes of Education and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) as nodal agency for teacher training; (x) Ensuring safe, secure and conducive learning environment and maintenance of standards in schooling provisions and (xi) Promoting vocational education.

The State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) are an integral part of the Samagra Shiksha scheme. One of the major objectives under the scheme is strengthening and up-gradation of SCERTs/State Institutes of Education and DIET as a nodal agency for teacher training. Under the scheme, financial assistance is also provided to all the States/UTs for strengthening of the SCERTs and DIETs and to emphasize the integration of training structures, the SCERT has been designated as the nodal agency in the state for conduct of Teacher's Training and preparation/conduct of combined annual teacher training calendars for all teachers, from ECCE to the senior secondary level.

In-service teacher and teacher educators training have been an important aspect of erstwhile Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE). These trainings were conducted by the concerned States and UTs through SCERTs and the DIETs. Financial provision was also provided in the Project Approval Board meetings under these schemes as per state specific proposals for in-service teacher training including training of master trainers and teacher educators. The erstwhile schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE) have been subsumed in the integrated centrally sponsored scheme, namely, Samagra Shiksha- effective from 2018-19.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has also launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha in 2019-20. NISHTHA is a capacity building programme for "Improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training". NISHTHA training has been extended to secondary level teachers and to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for training of master trainers.

Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of

Samagra Shiksha. The scheme reaches out to girls, and children belonging to SC, ST, minority communities and transgender. Under Samagra Shiksha, various interventions have been targeted for girls, which include opening of schools in the neighbourhood to make access easier for girls, free uniform and text-books to girls up to Class VIII, additional teachers and residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas, appointment of additional teachers including women teachers, stipend to CWSN girls from class I to class XII, separate toilets for girls, teachers sensitization programmes to promote girls participation, gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials including text books, Self Defence Training, provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas etc.

NISHTHA, inter-alia, covers relevance of Gender Dimensions in Teaching and Learning Process, which helps teachers to use and adopt learning activities that foster gender sensitive classroom environment. Further, teachers are also oriented on counseling, provisions of POCSO Act, Juvenile Justice Act, School Safety guidelines, helpline and emergency numbers, drop-box for complaints, etc.

Further, Self Defence training is imparted under 'Rani Laxmi Bai Aatma Raksha Prashikshan' to girls of classes VI to XII, studying in Government Schools, to ensure safety and security of girls, empower girls to tackle risk of assault and boost their self-confidence. Self defence training is also given in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). Financial assistance is provided for this component under Samagra Shiksha.

The information was given by the Minister of State for Education, Smt. Annpurna Devi in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

SS/AK

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