

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**Special focus districts with high concentration of population of SCs, STs and Muslims
identified under SSA**New Delhi, March 19th, 2018

Bridging gender and social category gaps in elementary education is one of the major goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Consequently, SSA attempts to reach out to girls and children belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Muslims and other marginalised communities. SSA has also given attention to urban deprived children, children affected by periodic migration, and children living in remote and scattered habitations.

Under the SSA, the districts with high concentration of population of SCs, STs and Muslims have been identified as Special Focus Districts (SFDs). The criteria for identifying the SFDs in case of SCs and STs is a population of 25% and above, while for Muslims, it is 20% and above population. SFDs also include 121 districts identified by Ministry of Minority Affairs to monitor implementation of SSA as part of Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme and 88 districts identified by Ministry of Home Affairs as districts affected with Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

Through the interventions made under SSA in SFDs, at the national level the enrolment share of SC children as per Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE), 2015-16, at primary and upper primary level is 19.94% and 19.49% respectively, whereas their share in population is 16.6% (as per Census 2011). Similarly, the enrolment share of ST children at primary and upper primary level as per UDISE 2015-16, is 10.64% and 9.81% respectively, whereas their share in population is 8.6% (as per Census 2011). The enrolment of girls also shows considerable improvement over the years and it increased to 48.21% in 2015-16 from 47.79% in 2005-06 at primary level and at upper primary level it increased to 48.63% in 2015-16 from 48.20% in 2005-06. As per the findings of National Achievement Surveys conducted by the National Council of Educational Research & Training, the SC/ST children have performed better than the national average in Language, Maths, Science and Social Science, in many of the States.

A total of 323 districts under one or more of the above categories have been identified as SFDs under SSA.

Universal enrolment at elementary level is the primary goal of SSA. It has provided 2.04 lakh primary and 1.59 lakh upper primary schools for ensuring universal provisioning of schooling

facilities. Preference for opening of school is given to tribal areas, and areas with high concentration of SC, ST and minority population.

Besides, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), which are upper primary residential schools for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, Other Backward Caste and minorities, have played an important role in furthering the goal of girls' education in educationally backward blocks of the country. Under the SSA, provisions have also been made for residential schools/hostels for children living in sparsely populated areas, children living in areas where schools cannot be opened due to unavailability of land and children in need of care and protection.

This information was given by the Minister of State (HRD), Shri Upendra Kushwaha today in a written reply to a Lok Sabha question.

NB/AKJ/YP/RK/Goals of SSA