STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, WOMEN, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND SPORTS

Plans for Bridging the Learning gap caused due to school lockdowns

THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY EIGHTH REPORT

ABSTRACT

The Report dealt with tackling the issue of learning gap caused by the closure of schools and universities during the COVID-19 pandemic, reviewing the mode of instruction and examinations in educational institutions, and making plans for reopening of schools.

INTRODUCTION

Preparedness of schools, higher and technical education sectors during the pandemic

In the wake of the pandemic, educational institutions were forced to shift to online teaching and digitisation of courses. Syllabus content was also made available via TV, through channels like Swayam Prabha, helplines like Yukti and Manodarpan were launched to give students psychological assistance. Teachers and faculty were trained in using technologies like Zoom and Webex, and various other measures were taken to minimise learning loss, such as content being uploaded on DIKSHA platform for students with special needs.

Concern areas and initiatives taken

The Ministry of Education, identified the following concern areas: students having little to no access to any digital device for learning, process to be followed by the State to reach out to students who do not have any digital device and remedial action, the process of assessment of students during pandemic, problems faced by the children of migrant labourers, ensuring safety of students on reopening of schools, concising the syllabus during pandemic, psychosocial problems faced by the students during pandemic, preventing dropouts, locating out of school children and mainstreaming them, and tracking children and their learning levels. To this regard, various initiatives were highlighted by the Department, such as PM e-Vidya, QR-coded textbooks for

children, Continuous Learning Plans being prepared by schools for each student, and other initiatives catering to students with lack of digital devices, like home delivery of books and notes in states like Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Learning loss

The pandemic caused a global education crisis, with the stalling of schools and universities causing adverse effects, which include loss of socialisation, weakening of foundational knowledge of students, children dropping out of schools, etc. UNICEF India suggested the following measures, like preparing for safe reopening of schools, mapping out-of-school children and ensuring their safe return, child-friendly learning environment in schools, etc. The best practices of other countries were discussed, as well as the global situation with regards to impact on education by the pandemic.

Efficacy of digital education

Online learning could not be the sole provider of education in the long run. However, online teaching methodologies should be included, so as to enhance digital literacy of both students and teachers, and make them employable in the new world.

Digital divide

While serious efforts were made to digitise education and spread its coverage, there remained a digital divide, as all parts of the country were not equipped to make digital education accessible to all. The Report highlighted two issues, internet connectivity and its speed across the country, and availability of gadgets, and realised that an urban-rural divide was present.

Children with special needs, out-of-school children, and children of migrant workers

Various initiatives were launched by the Government, in order to cater to these vulnerable groups. These include streamlining the admission process and continued education of migrant children, financial assistance to states for carrying out activities to reduce drop-out rates under Samagra Shiksha, capturing missing children on PRABANDH portal, and provision of books and videos for children with special needs on DIKSHA portal, etc.

Curriculum remodelling

"To combat COVID-19 situation, the Ministry of Education reduced the syllabus by 30 per cent. Most of the States/UTs also reduced the syllabus by 30 per cent to help students to cover the syllabus."

Capacity building of teachers

The Committee noted the difficulties that teachers had to face while transitioning from traditional to online method of teaching. To make teachers digitally enabled, many training workshops were conducted by the Department of School Education and Literacy, and various states.

Use of satellite TV for telecasting educational content

The Department of School Education and Literacy worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Telecommunications and CSC e-Governance Ltd., for ensuring internet connectivity through Bharatnet in 2.5 lakh villages. Educational telecasts were done on 25 Doordarshan State Networks, and on All India Radio by 12 states. Many states had dedicated Doordarshan channels for educational purposes, like Vidya Varadhi in Andhra Pradesh, Arun Prabha in Arunachal Pradesh, Mera Doordarshan Mera Vidyalaya in Bihar, etc.

Review of examinations and assessments

As an interim measure, the School Education Department, along with CBSE, developed guidelines for the internal assessment of grade X and XII students, in the absence of Board examinations. However, apprehensions were raised with regards to the transparency of the process, and the policy of moderation.

Budget for digital education

The Education Ministry had released ₹5228 Crore in ad-hoc grants to the states under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme in the financial year 2021-22, the Department informed that a budget of ₹1181.31 Crore was allotted to 25 states for digital education, whose Project Appraisal Board had taken place in April-May 2021, and approximately ₹500 Crore were considered by the PAB for proposals of the remaining 11 states. In 2020-21, the Ministry had approved ₹1081.68 Crore to 36 states/UTs, out of which ₹808.79 Crore was utilized.

Hybrid education as the future

With schools having to adapt to online modes of teaching, the Department of School Education and Literacy undertake initiatives to harness information technology in education.

Some of these are: Vidyadaan, which uses DIKSHA platform to seek contribution of e-learning resources for school education, Chat Bot- Technology Aided Responses and Answers, and National Digital Education Architecture. The Committee believed that despite its limitations, online education would become an important part of school education and that a Blended mode of education needs to be developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Recommendations covered various topics , like learning loss, need for proper documentation and data collection, ensuring continued learning, the efficacy of digital education, digital divide, catering to children with special needs, out-of-school children, children of migrant workers, capacity building of teachers, review of examinations and assessments, reopening of schools, and hybrid education.

Here is the detailed summary of the recommendations and their implementation:

Learning Loss

Need for proper documentation and data collection
Ensuring continued learning

Efficacy of digital education

Digital Divide

Children with special needs, out-of-school children, children of migrant workers

Capacity building of teachers

Review of Examinations and Assessments

Reopening of schools

Hybrid Education

.	Recommendation	Implementation
	Learning Loss	
1	Intensive bridge courses and accelerated learn programmes	Alternative Academic Calendar developed by NCERT; guideline mainstreaming of children of migrant workers and out-of-school children issued by Department of School Education; bridge cours developed by NCERT for studying in special training centres; sp classes in KVS and NVS for mitigating learning loss
2	Assessing Learning Outcomes throu MCQs/quizzes, and remedial classes	Formative assessments through MCQs a quizzes, remedial classes
3	Helping students who are lagging behind by v of extra classes, assigning expert teach collaborative learning, etc.	NCERT prepared 'Students Learn Enhancement Guidelines'; formation WhatsApp groups for clarifying doubts

4	Specific instructional materials for spec learning requirements of students	Teachers involving parents in developing Teaching Learning Material at pre-school level; Vidya Pravesh for Grade-I children; I NVS, Instructional package (supplementary learning materials / work books, worksheet quizzes etc.) and learning resources such as Exemplar problems & Bridge course materials are developed and being provided the students along with similar materials available on Diksha Portal; in KVS, worksheets, handouts are being prepared an used; in NIOS, worksheets at Secondary an Senior Secondary level are being developed with the purpose to provide academic suppo to learners and keep them academically engaged through constant practice
5	Helpline numbers for every subject, phone-in programmes aired on TV/radio	PM e-Vidya; to reach out to those students who lack access to technology, various innovative activities are being done at national, state or district level such as Gali Gali Sim-Sim, Tili-Mili programme, Motor Eskool, Roving Teacher, Project SMILE (Social Media Interface for Learning Engagement), e-Kaksha, formation of Whatsapp and other social media groups, Work Book Distribution at home, Teacher calling to maintain connects with students
6	Mapping learning outcomes through formativ assessments like ChatBot Assessment	
	Need for proper documentation and data collection	

7	Learning loss assessment throughout the coun	National Achievement Survey conducted o 12 November 2021 to assess learning outcomes of students of grades III, V, VIII and X; NIPUN Bharat initiative for enhanc foundational literacy and numeracy; Department has constantly advised States/U through guidelines and meetings like - PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Educati Learning Enhancement Guidelines for Continuous Learning, Covid Action Plan fo School Education, Guidelines for parents o Home Based Education etc.; financial assistance for supporting OoSC under Samagra Shiksha, various other initiatives t reduce drop-out rates
8	Comparing basic reading, writing and arithme skills pre- and post-COVID	
9	Bringing back out-of-school children	
10	Impact of online education	PM e-Vidya, Bharat Net programme, Pragy Guidelines, digital infrastructure governmental educational institutions in pla
11	Availability of digital devices and remedial actions taken	
12	Performance assessment of teachers with rega to handling technology	
13	Minimum requirements of technological infrastructure for improving digital education	
14	Weekly assessment of digital learning outcom	

	Ensuring continued learning	
15	Utilising budget for digital education	PM e-Vidya as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan; Committee recommends that the Ministry should focus towards increasing th reach of these programmes to remotest area of the country; the Department has not addressed various specific recommendation like underutilization of Budgetary grants by States, increasing transponder capacity and bandwidth for enhanced educational conten and upgradation of Edusat programme etc, which had been made by the Committee
16	Telecast of educational programmes throu satellite TV	
17	Publicity to such educational programmes	
18	Making those programmes livelier and engagi	
19	ISRO providing increased transponder capac for enhanced reach	
20	Increased bandwidth for community radios	
21	Encouraging states to air educational content DD regional TV channels	
22	Upgrading tele-education networks in differ states under EduSat	
23	All schools in small towns and villages to equipped with Doordarshan Free Dish	
	Efficacy of digital education	

24	Recorded MOOCs in all regional languages	E-Content is available in 33 Indian languag on DIKSHA; 4,167 Textbooks are energize by States/UTs and published on DIKSHA; States/UTs and central organizations (including CBSE and NCERT) are leveragi Vidya Daan to source content on DIKSHA; CBSE has advised its schools to follow the PRAGYATA Guidelines for Digital Educat developed by Ministry of Education; NVS teachers have created class-wise and subject-wise e-content that was circulated t all the JNVs for the use of teachers and students during digital / online learning; Single Learning Management System (LM using platform of Microsoft Teams for Education is being adopted in NVS for onli classes; technical courses have been incorporated in curriculum
25	Integrated Learning Management System	
26	AI-based education tools which can collect d on students' level of understanding a accordingly customise digital content to h learning process	
27	AR and VR education solutions to ena interactive learning	
28	Virtual labs with simulation exercises practical classes	
29	Regular feedback mechanism for e-content	
30	Technical courses to be incorporated curriculum	
	Digital divide	
31	Making available high-speed internet, 1 TV desktop computer, large screen projectors schools, using non-conventional energy sour in schools to deal with power outages	Under Bharat Net programme, MeitY assigned the task of providing FTTH connectivity to Gram Panchayats and government institutions and schools; Navodaya Vidyalayas have well equipped computer labs and smart computer labs wit 40 laptop / tablets in most of the schools th are used by the students for their educationa
32	Distributing free gadgets to students educational purposes, like Ladakh	

33	Digital library in schools	needs, students who do not afford digital devices are being guided through Mobile School / home visits by teachers at a centra located place of students residence, persona contact by the teachers using telephone or through indirect contact; KV also has good digital infrastructure; live video programme by NIOS, DIKSHA portal, Live Personal Contact Programmes through Web Radio, Community Radio of NIOS, MOOCs, worksheets, study material in DAISY form for Divyang students
34	Provide digital devices to EWS/marginali students with help from private sector	
35	Classes with physical distancing halls/auditoriums in small towns and villages	
36	Proposal for provision of internet packs concessional rates for students from backw sections, and high-speed internet in all school	
37	Best practices followed in some schools/state be replicated at a large scale	
	Children with special needs, out-of-school children, children of migrant workers	
38	Publicity to measures taken by Department School Education to impart inclusive educat to all students	Department of School Education & Literac shared detailed guidelines dated 13th July, 2020 and 7th January, 2021, on the steps to taken by the States and UTs; guidelines include admission without any procedural formalities, identification of out of school children, enrolment drives and awareness generation, student support while schools a closed, continued education for Children W Special Needs (CWSN), student support on school reopening and Teacher capacity building; NIOS has transformed seven
39	Stricter implementation of guidelines in t regard	

40	Develop textbooks in DAISY format in regio languages	subjects each at Secondary and Senior Secondary level to Video format in Indian Sign Language for facilitating education of deaf and hard of hearing learners. These sig language videos are available on NIOS Channel on YouTube and Diksha platform
41	Special A/V content in Indian Sign Language	
	Capacity Building of Teachers	
42	Augment existing digital infrastructure a create more such facilities for optimal utilisat by teachers	NISHTHA programme launched by Department of School Education for integrated teacher training, NCERT conducting online courses on ICT for teach training, initiatives taken by NIOS as well i this regard
43	Training teachers so as to enable them ma captivating content for digital education a engage students	
44	Teachers in backward areas to be given train in handling digital devices	
45	Incentivising teachers to shift to dig education	
46	Specialised training programmes for teaching children with special needs	
	Review of Examinations and Assessments	

47	Transparent system of continuous assessment throughout the year to be developed	CBSE's scheme of examinations in classes to XII mandates schools to conduct multi examinations continuously; schools required to conduct periodic tests and ot internal assessments, portfolios, projects a other formative and summative tests; formative assessment, learning gaps identified and various remedial measures taken to address the learning gaps; CBSE developed resource material to handh teachers regarding formative and summat assessment
48	Guidelines for Internal Assessment, Practicals Project Work, for classes X and XII to be formulated and implemented across the count	
49	Workbooks be designed to assess understandi of core concepts and their application in each subject	
50	Experiential learning may be encouraged	
	Reopening of schools	
51	Accentuated vaccination programmes for students and staff	Vaccination programme has been going successfully
52	Classes on alternate days/shifts, with observar of COVID protocol	Detailed SOPs for reopening of schools h incorporated these suggestions
53	Regular thermal screening at the time attendance and random RT-PCR testing	
54	Zero tolerance towards laxity in maintain COVID protocol	

55	Two oxygen concentrators with trai personnel in schools	SOPs provide for Emergency Task Teams
56	EWS/Marginalised students to be provi masks/sanitisers	Incorporated in SOPs and the Ministry Education have formed the National Steer Committee for the development of Natio Curriculum Framework
57	Frequent inspection of schools by hea inspectors	
58	Best practices from different countries to taken into consideration	Best practices have been taken i consideration
	Hybrid education	
59	Investments made by Centre/states to develop digital education during the pandemic should incorporated in overall education system	The Ministry of Education has formed the National Steering Committee for the development of National Curriculum Frameworks on 21 September 2021, which will be assisted by NCERT; 'All the Nation Curriculum Frameworks would also reflect upon the implications of situations such as COVID-19 Pandemic on respective areas f future'; Committee recommends that the Ministry should ensure that proper infrastructure is available so as to address a dropouts taking place and to apprise the Committee of the efforts taken up by the Ministry in this regard and also the steps

		taken to monitor and inspect the programm to be initiated at the grass root level
60	Sorting out impediments to ensure good quali and equitable digital education	
61	Remodelling curricular learning at all levels blend conventional and digital pedagogy	
62	Adopting best practices of other countries	
63	One school based on hybrid model in every district and tehsil of India	