

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:418

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2011

LEARNING ABILITY OF STUDENTS

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Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether as per a recent United Nations sponsored study, it has been revealed that in as many as five States in the country, the students learning ability has not improved though more Government funds for education has increased students enrolment;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to improve the learning ability of students in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the further steps proposed to be taken to improve the standard of education in schools in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) & (b): Assessment Survey Evaluation Research (ASER) Centre, an independent unit of Pratham Network, a Non-Governmental Organisation, has, in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), released a report of a study conducted on teaching and learning in rural India, titled, 'Inside Primary Schools: A study of teaching and learning in rural India'. This study covered government primary schools in five states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan and sampled 30,000 rural children in Standard 2 and Standard 4 in about 900 schools. The study has noted that in the last two decades, impressive strides have been made in India in terms of providing school buildings, classrooms, teachers, textbook and other facilities, and that these have been matched by very significant improvements in enrollment. While noting that children's learning improves over the course of a year, the study also points out that most children are two grades below the required level of proficiency in Language and Mathematics. The study has made certain recommendations, including that textbooks need to be more developmentally appropriate in what children are expected to learn.

(c) to (e): Government is committed to improving the quality of elementary education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 has become operative with effect from 1st April, 2010. The RTE Act places obligation on the appropriate government and local authority to ensure good quality elementary education conforming to the norms and standards specified in the Schedule to the Act. The RTE Act also provides that the curriculum and evaluation procedure shall be in accordance with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India, and shall take into account the all-round development of the child, build on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent, provide for learning through activities, discovery and exploration, and shall make the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety.

The norms of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) have been revised to correspond with the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009 and several steps have been taken to improve the quality of elementary education, including recruitment of additional teachers, periodic in-service training of teachers, free distribution of textbooks, regular academic support to primary and upper primary schools through Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres and support for learning enhancement programmes for Mathematics and Language.