

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1123  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2018**

**Weight of School Bags**

**1123. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH:  
SHRIMATI RAKSHATAI KHADSE:  
SHRI RAJAN VICHARE:  
SHRIMATI POONAMBEN MAADAM:  
KUNWAR BHARATENDRA:  
SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA:  
SHRI ASADUDDIN OWASI:  
SHRI RAKESH SINGH:  
SHRI TEJ PRATAP SINGH YADAV:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has asked all the States to restrict the weight of school bags and issued guidelines especially for I and II class children regarding homework and subjects to be taught, if so, the details thereof and the response of the State Governments in this regard;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the physical and mental development of young children is affected by carrying heavy school bags and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any empirical study was made in the country before making the said decision, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) the reasons for which schools are not allowed to prescribe any other subject except language, mathematics and Environmental studies for II and III classes;
- (e) whether the Government has any proposal to issue tablets for the use of children in lieu of books and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether it is also a fact that private schools are not following guidelines issued by the Union Government to States from time to time and are adding more weight of school books to children and if so, the steps taken/being taken by the Union Government in consultation with States to ensure the compliance of guidelines in letter and spirit so issued?

**ANSWER**  
**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
**(DR. SATYA PAL SINGH)**

**(a):** The Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras, vide order dated 29/05/2018 in W.P. 25680 of 2017- M. Purushothaman Vs Union of India and others, has passed interalia the following directions to the Union of India:

(i) Direct the State Governments and Union Territories forthwith not to prescribe any homework for class I & II students in the State Board/Matriculation/Anglo Indian schools.

(ii) Direct the state Governments and union territories forthwith, not to prescribe any other subjects except language and Mathematics for Class I and II students and language, EVS and mathematics for Class III to V students as prescribed by NCERT.

(iii) To disaffiliate schools prescribing homework and non-prescribed subject for Class I and II students and class III to V students.

(iv) Direct the State Governments and Government of Union Territories forthwith to formulate "Children School Bag Policy" reducing the weight of the School bags in the line of guidelines issued by either State of Telangana or State of Maharashtra.

(v) Direct the State Governments and Government of Union Territories forthwith to form special squads to inspect the schools and prevent the use of non-prescribed books.

In compliance of above directions, a communication was addressed to all States and UT's vide letter no. 1-4/2018-IS-3 dated 05/10/2018. Further, an expert group has been constituted to formulate a policy on children school bag.

**(b) to (d):** The National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005 brought out by NCERT addresses the issue related to curriculum load keeping in view the Yash Pal Committee Report (1993) titled 'Learning Without Burden'. NCF states that 'Heavy School Bags' is the common source of physical discomfort due to heavy encyclopedic types of information loaded textbooks. To overcome this problem, NCF emphasizes upon shifting learning away from rote methods, connecting knowledge to life outside school, enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric, and making examination more flexible and integrated to classroom life.

The NCERT has taken following initiatives in this context:

(i) New syllabi and textbook reflects the NCF 2005 perspective on curriculum load and are interactive and based on child centered pedagogy. The NCERT textbooks and other teaching learning materials are available online on its website [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in).

(ii) NCERT recommends only two books (language and mathematics) for Classes I and II and three books (language, EVS and mathematics) for Classes III to V.

(iii) NCF 2005 suggests that autonomy should be given to the schools to develop their own flexible time table so that school can teach two or three subject each day giving students more time to do activities and develop deeper understanding of the concept. The NCERT addresses this issue incapacity building programme for teacher and school heads.

**(e):** As part of the digital initiatives of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sanghathan (KVS), under 'Project e-Prajna' 5076 students in 25 Regions have been given Touch Tablets pre-loaded with e-Contents of Maths and Science Subjects. Teachers of these KVs are using tablets for classroom transaction.

For extending access of students, teachers and other stakeholders to variety of open ICT resources (teaching-learning), the NCERT has introduced National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER).

'e-pathshala' is another platform which contains e-resource for the students and teachers. The e-resources for students include e-books for all subjects from classes I to XII, e-contents (i.e. audio, video, interactive object, text images, maps), question banks, e-courses in various subjects etc.

**(f):** Education comes under the Concurrent List of the Constitution and the States and UTs are the competent authority for implementation of the guidelines in the schools under their territorial control. Central Government reviews the implementation of the different guidelines issued from time to time with the States and UTs.

CBSE has advised schools to ensure that no homework is given to students till Classes I and II vide circular dated 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. Circulars have been issued by the board specifying the number of textbooks to be prescribed in Classes I- VIII as per NCERT curriculum to reduce the weight of school bags.

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