



# Catalyst

QUARTER 1 / APRIL - JUNE 2014

## Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

Young people are the drivers of India's rapid economic and social progress. To fully realise this significant potential, the Government of India is committed to providing quality secondary education to all children so that they are prepared for higher education, world of work and as citizens of a progressive society.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) scheme initiated in 2009, demonstrates the government's ambition for a secondary education system that can support India's growth and development.

RMSA aims to increase the enrolment rate to 75% at the secondary stage within 5 years by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every home. It also aims to improve the quality of secondary education making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, removing gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, and providing universal access to secondary level education by 2017. Above all, it aims to dramatically improve learning outcomes so that young people leaving school can play their part in the development of the country.



Government of India

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first Issue of the RMSA Newsletter, a quarterly publication from MHRD highlighting RMSA activities, success stories and innovative initiatives undertaken by you for improving secondary education in India!

This newsletter is a medium for the RMSA stakeholders at the centre and the states to communicate and share information with each other. Each edition will include 'Updates' and 'Happenings', a roundup of all events and activities concerning RMSA, 'Spotlight', highlighting innovative practices carried out by the states under the RMSA scheme. In this edition, we are featuring the Self Defence Training for girls undertaken in the state of Mizoram. Lastly there will be a 'Feature' section that will focus on issues and challenges related to secondary education sector. In this issue we have featured an article on 'School Quality'.

We hope you will enjoy reading this first edition of CATALYST and find it a useful update on RMSA related endeavours. We would like to thank everyone who has supported this edition by contributing articles and information.

The future success of CATALYST depends on your comments and ideas! We do encourage all of you to contribute to enrich the forthcoming editions of this Newsletter!

If you have any questions regarding the newsletter, please feel free to contact me.

S.Radha Chauhan

Joint Secretary, Secondary Education, MHRD

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## Bring the “quality” agenda to the forefront

### First meeting of the National Resource Group for RMSA

A National Resource Group for RMSA under the chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD has been set up by the MHRD. Drawing membership from different departments of MHRD, universities, state functionaries, NCERT, NGOs and other educational institutions, the purpose of the resource group is to guide RMSA programme to meet its objectives for quality improvement in secondary education.

The first meeting of the NRG was conducted by NCERT on 4th March, 2014 at NIE, New Delhi. Shri Rajarshi Bhattacharya, Secretary, (SE&L), MHRD chaired the meeting. The focus

of this meeting was on quality interventions in secondary education. NRG discussed a range of issues related to curriculum, capacity building of teachers, teacher educators and state

functionaries, ICT, inclusive education, gender issues, assessment and examination, achievement survey, etc. and provided significant recommendations.



## National Repository of Open Educational Resources

### Teacher learning portal pioneered by NCERT



The Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), has developed the National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER). Conceptualized

and created in collaboration with the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the NROER was launched on 13th August 2013 in New Delhi.

Based on the concept of semantic map, the Metastudio hosted NROER provides digital resources for Mathematics, Science and Social Science in multiple languages. This supports teachers in constructing their own personalized themes for classroom teaching, besides uploading, sharing, commenting and evaluating the resource materials available.

Garnering overwhelming responses, the NROER has made resources available to the public at <http://nroer.gov.in>. Plans are afoot to include all classes from I-XII across different subjects and also include material for teacher education.

The CIET has also organized multiple online events in the year 2013 to popularize and disseminate the repository and its content after its initial launch.

## Making data speak using info-graphics

### Class VIII National Achievement Survey Reports released

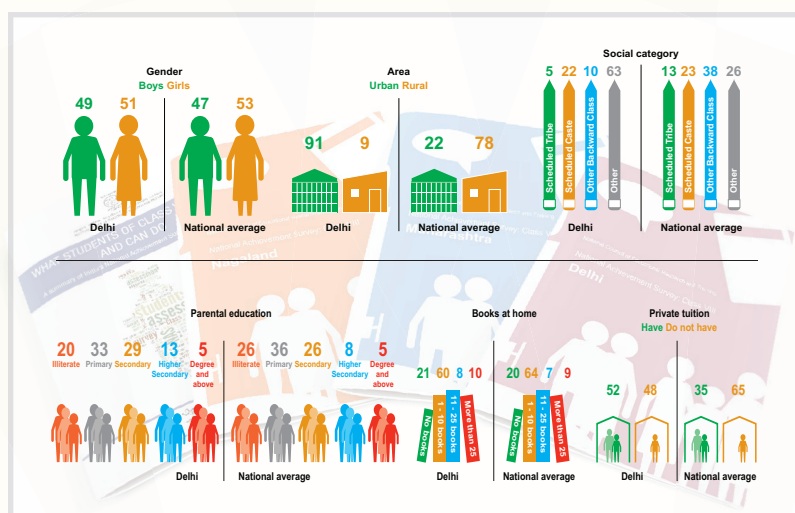
The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) through its Educational Survey Division (ESD) conducted the National Achievement Survey (NAS) for Class VIII. NAS is designed to provide information about learning achievement of students in government and government-aided schools by administering standardized tests to students. These surveys also collect information about relevant background factors related to school environment, instructional

practices, home backgrounds of students, teachers' qualifications etc.

The data obtained from NAS provides policy makers, curriculum specialists, researchers and other stake holders with a 'snapshot' of what students know and can do in key subjects at a particular point in time. The results also serve as a baseline against which future progress in education may be evaluated. During the Class VIII survey, tests and questionnaires were administered to 1,88,647 students in

6,722 schools across 33 states and union territories.

Alongside the technical reports, the findings from the survey have also been documented into National and 33 State/UT summary reports using high quality information graphics. Use of info graphics makes the data more accessible and comprehensible to a wider range of audience. The reports are available for download on [www.ncert.nic.in](http://www.ncert.nic.in)



**Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisites for acquiring learning of any kind**

Mahatma Gandhi

## National Achievement Survey (NAS) Class X

First ever NAS Class X underway

Under RMSA, the NAS is being extended to the secondary education sector for the first time. The survey conducted by NCERT will cover all types of schools; government, government aided and private across the country. It will be fielded during the winter of 2014-15. The items for the survey in the subjects Hindi, Mathematics, Science, English and Social Science are expected to be piloted in 15 regional languages during the second week of June, 2014 to the first week of July, 2014.

## RMSA Annual Work Plan and Budgets, 2014-15

Appraisals completed for all states and UTs

The appraisal of Integrated Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&Bs), for RMSA, ICT, GH, VE and IEDSS scheme for year 2014-15 has been completed for all states and UTs except Jharkhand and Nagaland. The AWP&Bs of states are reviewed and appraised by Technical Support Group (TSG-RMSA) every year and presented to the Project Approval Board (PAB) for final approval. The PAB is Chaired by Secretary, School Education and Literacy, MHRD and has representation from MHRD, Planning Commission, State government, and other national institutions such as NCERT and NUEPA.

**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**

Nelson Mandela



## **Eduexcellence** Preparing academic leaders of tomorrow

Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) successfully conducted its 5th International Conference on School Education on 26th & 27th October, 2013.

The two day conference titled “Excellence in School Education: Leadership and Values” saw participation from around 500 government school principals.

The objective of the conference was to identify and disseminate best practices in academic leadership and value inculcation and support individual participants to identify their key areas of growth through a workshop mode.

With a judicious mix of plenary sessions led by national and international experts, paper presentations by researchers and parallel workshops on core thematic areas, the conference became a resource centre for those looking at infusing international practices in their schools.

Initiated in 2009, the conference series has evolved as a comprehensive source for the best research work and practices in the world. Generating 450 research papers, 2200 participants representing 1500 schools and speakers from countries like US, UK, Singapore etc., these conferences have attracted contribution from institutions like NCERT, CBSE, IITs, CII, UNICEF, corporate world and foreign embassies.



## In-service Teacher Professional Development Programme

### Capacity building of State Key Resource Persons

Emergent perspectives in school and teacher education highlight the need for recognizing a teacher as a professional who has the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude. Committed to seeking new ways of doing things, a teacher needs to be reflective and sensitive to perceptions of the learners, institution and concerns of the society. This perspective demands continuing professional development of a teacher encompassing pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Realizing this, NCERT has embarked on a programme to support capacity building of teacher educators and teachers at the secondary stage through its In-service Teacher Professional Development (ITPD) programmes. Designed keeping in view the provision of five-day subject specific teacher training programme under RMSA, this exercise has been made rich in terms of its content material and pedagogy for face-to-face interaction and gives participants an opportunity to engage in their own professional development.

As a part of this initiative, capacity building programmes for Key Resource Persons (KRPs) were conducted in six selected states, viz., Arunachal

Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana in key curricular areas of Science and Mathematics using In-service Teacher Professional Development (ITPD) packages for both the subjects..

Around 600 KRPs in Science and Mathematics participated in these capacity building programmes.

While participants learned by doing, interacting with each other and through sessions on brain storming, reflection and questioning, they were also mentored during group work and presentations on classroom pedagogies. Reflective sessions on gender issues, inclusive education, value education, and adolescence education were built into the programme, alongside the content specific sessions that included hands-on experiences in science and mathematics using TLMs, kits and laboratories.

As a follow-up of these programmes, visits to training programmes conducted by states and also to schools to observe classroom were made by NCERT. Now, states are being encouraged to utilize these KRPs in their teacher training programmes. Himachal Pradesh and Bihar have begun doing so.



**Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.**

Plato



## Curriculum Reform

### A step towards quality education

Curriculum reform has been emphasized in the RMSA Framework as one of the essential quality interventions. With a view to study the curriculum of states which have developed their own curricular material at the secondary stage, the NCERT conducted a series of workshops.

The first workshop was conducted by the RIE, Bhopal from 5th to 8th, February, 2013 for the state of Maharashtra; second workshop by RIE, Ajmer from 25th to 28th February, 2013 for the state of Uttar Pradesh; the third workshop by NERIE, Shillong for the state of Nagaland from 5th to 9th March, 2013 and the fourth workshop was conducted by the RIE, Mysore for the states of Kerala and Karnataka from 18th to 21st March, 2013.

Around 100 State curriculum developers from the five State boards, SCERTs, Teacher Education Institu-



tions and schools etc., participated and analyzed their own curricular material with the help of research tools developed by the NCERT and supported by NCERT faculty and other experts.

Findings of the study in general revealed weak curriculum linkages between elementary and secondary

stage curricular material; no space for children to construct their own knowledge; information load; and inadequate emphasis on inclusion, issues of gender etc.

These findings were shared with state functionaries of all the five states during the workshop conducted on 9-10 October 2013 at NIE Delhi.

## School Management and Development Committee Training

### Assam and Kerala lead the way

A two day School Management and Development Committee training session was recently conducted in the state of Assam. Hosted at the district level, these training sessions were organised in collaboration with UNICEF and covered 2031 SMDCs with 6 members from each.

Revolving around a multitude of activities, the sessions resulted in the creation of training modules that got printed in 4 languages namely Assamese, English, Bodo and Bengali. Developed with both financial and technical assistance from Assam, the modules incorporated topics like over-

view of RMSA, role of SMDC, preparation of school development plan, adolescence and life skills amongst many others that were transacted to the master trainers.

Apart from the creation of the modules and training of the master trainers and SMDC members, feedback and responses were as well collected during the training itself from the participants.

The town of Palakkad in Kerala also hosted a

similar kind of SMDC training session for preparing members with the skills of making perspective and annual plans at the school level.



## Karnataka's Subject Teacher Forum

### Empowering teachers through technology

Karnataka has implemented an in-service teacher training program known as Subject Teacher Forum (STF) for high school teachers. This program is based on ICT integration in school teaching-learning processes and ICT enabled professional development of teachers.

Aiming at making teachers competent in teaching-learning processes, the forum technically empowers them in audio-video editing and reinventing of

new themes and lesson plans for the Subject Teacher Forum Portal.

As part of this training program, open educational resources have been created on [www.karnatakaeducation.org.in/KOER/](http://www.karnatakaeducation.org.in/KOER/) and over 10,000 emails have been shared on the STF email groups. Teachers use this forum to conduct discussions on subjects as well as on the larger issues of educational practice.

While the program is currently operational for subjects like Mathematics, science and social science, the plan for 2014-15 is to expand the same for language subjects apart from providing technical support to teams at district and state levels, incentivizing outstanding contributions from classroom practitioners, establishing school wiki and an independent web portal for Karnataka Open Education Resources (KOER).

## Revised Vocational Education for Higher Secondary Education

### A move to integrate vocational and general education

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education has been recently revised on 12 February 2014. This is with a view to align the scheme with the National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework now assimilated with the National Skills Qualification Framework recently notified for the country. The revised scheme while introducing vocational education at the secondary level, seeks to integrate vocational education with general education and provide horizontal and vertical mobility to the students. With the overall objective of enhancing the employability of

the students while providing sufficient flexibility at the implementation level, it envisages close partnership with the

industry in the design, development, delivery, assessment and certification of skills content.



## RMSA Joint Review Mission

### 3rd Joint Review Mission successfully concluded

The third JRM of RMSA was held from 13th to 27th January 2014. This was a field based review and a team of 2 members each (one MHRD nominee and one Development Partner nominee, with additional procurement and financial management experts visiting Bihar and Chhattisgarh) visited five States (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka,

Madhya Pradesh and Nagaland). The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to RMSA's goals; with a particular emphasis on a small number of issues and to discuss follow-up actions in the light of the Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon for each JRM.



## School Quality

**Every child in India deserves good quality education that will prepare them for life and it is our collective responsibility to work together to meet the challenge of providing it to them.**

But how do we define 'school quality'? School quality means an accurate understanding of how well a school provides for its students and how well the students learn and develop. These two things are often referred to as 'provision and outcomes' by educators around the world.

School quality can be determined by using a number of important indicators that are common to all schools around the world. These are known as 'quality indicators'. Common quality indicators are: how good is the teaching at the school, how well students are learning; how well students are developing socially; how well does curriculum match educational aims; and how well the school is led. The most important quality indicator in any school indicates how much progress students are making in their studies. Students' progress is the main reason we have schools in the first place! Good progress by all students is the hallmark of a good school, regardless of the curriculum it offers or who is leading it.

There are different ways by which we can review 'school quality' or how well the school is performing. In some countries, data from standardised external tests are used as a basis for judging school

performance or quality. This is a popular method because results can be obtained at a very low cost and also satisfy simple notions of 'accountability' and 'performance management.' Local testing of students' knowledge and skills across a narrow range of subject or system-wide results from National Achievement Survey and others are used as the sole indicator of how well a school is performing. These are usually not shared with individual schools and thus have very little impact upon them.

Another approach to determine school quality is Teacher and/or Principal performance review using set criteria. Here the prevailing belief is that it is more effective to manage individual performance than that of whole schools. These approaches to school performance management are taken for reasons of cost; they are only partly effective for understanding how well schools are performing.

Truly effective ways to review school quality is through frequent visits to schools by experienced educators who bring expertise about teaching and leadership. School

visits may be called 'inspections' or 'quality reviews' or 'performance monitoring' but their purposes are the same: to establish and/or verify the quality of education being provided to students and to ascertain the nature of the school's outcomes.

More importantly, school quality is the concern of the local school community throughout the year. School leaders, teachers, parents and even students should participate in the ongoing review of both provision and outcomes. It is only when all of these 'stakeholders' participate that schools maintain quality. The need for regular stakeholder participation in monitoring school quality cannot be over-emphasised. Due diligence is required of all school community members to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved by all students. The key to educational future lies with local involvement in the nation's schools. Although district, state and national contributions are important, it is members of the local communities whose contributions are indispensable.





## Mizoram gears up

### ‘Kick’ starts transformation in school girls

Over the years, with the increase in the number of girls getting educated and a rise in the estimated figure of their school enrolment, there has been an emergent need for addressing girl’s issues. Be it gender sensitization, sanitation or safety, the school education system is expected to invest its time in reviewing, planning and improvising on the various facilities necessary for girls to pursue uninterrupted quality education.

Acknowledging this fact and taking a step towards developing their confidence and self image, a self-defense centre has been set up in all the districts of Mizoram since 2011-12; covering 14,081 girls of both Government and Government aided schools. With a fleet of 54 trainers from the All Mizoram Karate Association offering training to all the schools as a part of a signed MoU, the special Karate classes are being held in mornings and evenings without affecting the usual academic time table.

Complementing the advantages of receiving quality education, this extra-curricular activity has been observed to add on to the personalities of these young women. Increasing their overall participation year-by-year, this initiative has not only prepared the students to defend themselves under various circumstances; but has also enhanced their confidence. Having a profound impact on their physical condition, the Karate sessions have helped the girls to attain certain exercise benefits like muscle toning and strengthening,

improved cardiovascular workout and enhanced coordination and balance.

Fostering mental growth and augmenting overall fitness in terms of flexibility, stamina and strength, the various kicks, punches, twists and turns have created a pool of self-dependent and motivated individuals; ready to win over the various challenges coming their way.

## Community participation in school development

### Government High School, Kakatpur, Odisha

The Government High School, Kakatpur is located next to the famous temple of Mother 'Maa Mangala' and is one of the oldest schools in Puri district established in 1945. The people of Kakatpur collected small funds from the community they refer as 'Musthi Bhikhya' (small amount of rice given as alms) as donations to set up a school. Earlier, the school was residential as students from the entire large undivided Puri district came here for education and over the years the school has produced a number of well-known personalities of the state.

#### Vision and Values of the school

The school's rich history of stellar academic performance and quality teaching are the result of the common values which the school leadership, teachers, parents and community members embrace. A true reflection of this is the reverence and high esteem held by the staff and other community members for all the past Head Teachers

#### Priorities of the school

The school strives to improve the learning achievement of students, organizing extra-curricular activities and regularity in conducting classes.

#### Challenges of the school

The community as well as the present school leadership point out to the short-durations of Head Teachers as a crucial management and functional crisis which affects present administrative effectiveness. The major challenge in the delivery of teaching and learning is the lack of adequate subject teachers which results in short duration and huge class sizes of more than 70 thus affecting quality. Besides this, although the school has a number of classrooms, most of them are unsafe for children. Infrastructure is insufficient to operate library and labs and a partially constructed boundary wall adds to the problems. Maintenance of an old but huge infrastructure also becomes a challenge in the absence of cleaning staff, watchman etc.

#### What works for the school

The teachers in the school have an average tenure of around ten years with senior teachers being there for around 15-20 years. The teachers and staff feel they are custodians of the glorious

history of the school and have collectively taken up the responsibility of school management when there has been a vacancy in the post of Head Teacher.

This feeling of belonging and camaraderie has helped the school to address the issue of inadequate subject teachers by sharing additional work-loads (often more than 40 classes in a week) to ensure that all classes are conducted. This is also reflected in the priority set out by school leadership. They discuss the performance of the students as a group after every assessment and take measures as required.

The school has had a history of strong community participation in both academic and non-academic matters. There is a very active Old Students Association (OSA) which regularly meets and functions out of a dedicated room within the school. Emotionally attached, the OSA brings in the school and the community together in advocating and lobbying with the District and State administration for creating better facilities in school and mobilizing private support in organizing various school events. In return, the community uses the school campus and its facilities for various community functions such as sports meets and literary events.

Parents of students communicate regularly with teachers about their children's learning and are encouraged to give suggestions for school improvement. They elect representatives to the SMDC and constantly supervise the functioning of the school. Though they are able to meet with the teachers to discuss their ward's progress, they are pained by the inadequacy of teachers and slight decline in enrolment.

The school has classes from VI to X which necessitates need for two committees for school management, i.e. School Management Committee (SMC) and School Management and Development Committee (SMDC), as per guidelines. The school faces delays in decision making due to lack of coordination between both the committees. One committee for the entire school, preferably the SMDC (as it has specific guidelines on qualified membership) would help the school in taking progressive decisions for the overall development of the school in a timely manner.

#### STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT



A pandal constructed in school campus by donations of Old Students and is used both by the school and the Community for various socio-cultural functions/ events.

**“The school stands for a principle – good teaching and regularity of classes”**

Parent

**“When around 800 students used to recite Morning Prayer, the entire town would stop by and listen. The Head Master of this school used to be a big man in this locality”**

SMDC member

DATE	PLANNED ACTIVITIES/WORKSHOP	FOR WHOM	LOCATION
<b>2014</b>			
May	3 Days Capacity building workshop	Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim	Guwahati
June	3 Days Capacity building workshop	Manipur & Nagaland	Manipur
June	3 Days Capacity building workshop	Tripura & Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar
June	2 Days Capacity building workshop	Jharkhand & Bihar	Ranchi
July	2 Days Capacity building workshop	Rajasthan	Jaipur
July	4th Joint Review Mission of RMSA	MHRD/States/NUEPA/NCERT/TSG	New Delhi
July	1 day Finance Review Meeting	RMSA SPD & Finance & Accounts Officials	New Delhi
July	Review Meeting of Monitoring Institution	Representative of MIs & State functionaries	New Delhi
<b>NAS class X</b>			
May	Translation of NAS class X items in regional languages	Experts identified by State board of school education	NCERT, Delhi Regional Institute Education - Bhopal, Mysore and Bhubaneshwar
May – June	Sampling workshop	Faculty of Education Survey Division, NCERT Experts identified by State boards of school education	NCERT, DELHI
June – July	Piloting of NAS class X items	Coordinators identified by State boards of school education	Various States

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