

COVID RESPONSE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION:

ACTION PLAN FOR ACCESS, RETENTION, CONTINUOUS LEARNING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

I. BACKGROUND:

In the year 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented public health emergency, affecting almost all countries and territories globally. The pandemic has led to severe disruptions in normal life, including closure of schools. It has impacted over 240 million children of our country who are enrolled in schools. Extended school closures may cause loss of learning. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, schools will not only have to remodel and re-imagine the way teaching and learning have happened so far, but will also need to introduce a suitable method of delivering quality education through a healthy mix of schooling at home and schooling at school.

The Department has taken several initiatives in the year 2020-21 to ensure that the school going students don't lag behind in their studies during COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the major initiatives taken up in this regard are:

- 1) **Consultations with states & UTs:** During COVID-19 Pandemic, Ministry of Education has held several consultations with the states and UTs at various levels. States and UTs were advised to use Alternative Academic Calendar, PRAGYATA Guidelines, Guidelines for Children of Migrant Labourers, Guidelines for identification and mainstreaming of out of school children, Learning Enhancement Guidelines, Manodarpan programme, DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing, Safe online Guidelines), PMeVIDYA under the bouquet of Swayam Prabha (One class, one TV channel), Vidyadaan portal for crowd sourcing of e-content, NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement, CBSE Shiksha Vani (Podcast), services of Community Radio Stations (CRS) during the Covid-19 period.
- 2) **Budgetary allocations:** To mitigate the effect of covid-19, Department of School Education and Literacy have allocated a total budget of Rs. 5784.05 crore under Samagra Shiksha for various interventions in 2020-21.
- 3) **Guidelines issued:** The following are the guidelines were issued in this regard:
 - i. PRAGYATA guideline on Digital Education
(https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf)
 - ii. Learning Enhancement Guidelines for Continuous Learning

- [https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Learning %20Enhancement Guidelines .pdf](https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Learning%20Enhancement%20Guidelines.pdf)
- iii. Guidelines for Children of Migrant Labourers
https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Migrant%20labour%20guideline.pdf
 - iv. Guidelines for School re-opening on Learning with Social Distancing
[https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SOP Guidelines for re opening schools.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SOP_Guidelines_for_reopening_schools.pdf)
 - v. Continuous Learning Plan (CLP)
[https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Learning %20Enhancement Guidelines .pdf](https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Learning%20Enhancement%20Guidelines.pdf)
 - vi. NCTE guidelines for TEIs
[https://ncte.gov.in/WebAdminFiles/RecentAnnouncement/0 20 08 2020 637 335320672297662.pdf](https://ncte.gov.in/WebAdminFiles/RecentAnnouncement/0_20_08_2020_637335320672297662.pdf)
 - vii. Guidelines for Out of School Children issued on 7th January 2021.
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/guidelines_oosc.pdf
- 4) **Teacher Capacity Building programmes** such as the National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) Online conducted on DIKSHA platform by NCERT for all teachers at elementary level covering all States and UTs; and Special Capacity Building of Teachers on How to conduct Online Classes where feasible conducted by CBSE, KVS & NVS and NCERT.
 - 5) **Teacher Resources** such as Alternative Academic Calendar; Special resources for Teachers- LOs mapped to curriculum, Teacher Energized Resource Material (TERM), Massive open and Online Courses (MOOCs) modules on experiential learning and competency-based education; and Open Educational Resources (OERs) for teacher trainees and teacher educators at Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) provided by the NCTE.
 - 6) **Expansion of DIKSHA under PM eVIDYA** to ensure availability of quality e-content at one single platform for students of all grades and teachers.
 - 7) **Launch of Manodarpan** (Toll Free Number: 8448440632) to cater to the socio-emotional and psychological needs of the students through NCERT trained counsellors
 - 8) **Student Resources delivery through platforms** such as PM e-VIDYA; DTH TV channels under the bouquet of SWAYAM PRABHA TV channels; DIKSHA; SWAYAM MOOCs of NCERT and NIOS, etc.
 - 9) **Energised Textbooks with QR codes mapped /tagged with e-content for grades 1 to 12**
 - 10) **Extensive content on Radio, Community Radio and Podcasts**

- 11) E-content for visually and hearing-impaired students
- 12) E-textbooks, e-Contents of NCERT on e-Pathshala and National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)
- 13) OLABS
- 14) Comic Books for students for imbibing 21st Century Skills
- 15) Practice book on mathematical literacy by CBSE

II. PRESENT SCENARIO AND AREAS OF CONCERN:

With the present COVID wave, that is more virulent and faster spreading, there is an urgent need to plan for the challenges ahead and prepare to make progress for the sake of students, parents, community and all stakeholders involved in this pursuit. **In this regard, the following are the major areas of that require interventions:**

- a. Identifying OoSC, Mainstreaming, Enrolment, retention, transition,
- b. Academic learning & cognitive development of students
- c. Capacity building - with specific focus on response to blended and home-based learning including student assessments and data use,
- d. Nutritional, socio-emotional support to systems' actors and students,
- e. Digital education and systems' development for monitoring, tracking and remediation.

III. THE ROADMAP

While we continue our efforts initiated last year, there is an imperative need to have an urgent and appropriate strategy to ensure that students are not dropping out of school, out of school children are getting appropriate support for mainstreaming and continuous support for learning is being provided to the students with and without access to digital devices. It would be pertinent to mention here that long term strategy to bring back each child to school has already been defined in National Education Policy 2020 which envisages 100% GER by 2030 from pre-primary to Sr. Secondary grades. The role of parents, community, local bodies in addition to teachers have become all the more important as their involvement is the key to ensure that there is no learning loss for the children in order to mitigate any adverse impact on future learning.

Therefore, the roadmap should essentially be composed of the following:

- **First Phase: MAINTAIN PHASE:**
Maintain the education service through initiatives such as MDM, home learning, identifying and bringing drop outs and OoSC back to school; Development of the Student Registry to mobilize services; Creating Control and

Command Centre for teachers and Schools and a Helpline for parents and students; teacher capacity building; engagement with parents and community.

- **Second Phase: RESTORE PHASE:**

This is the restore phase when schools will reopen; in this phase focus will be on learning recovery with packages to help children recover through teachers' supporting mental well-being of students, Bridge courses, roll out of State Students Registry and aggregated database in National Student's Registry, assessment reforms, pedagogical reforms, etc.

- **Third Phase: GROW PHASE:**

In this phase, very close tracking of achievements in learning levels and learning outcomes shall be undertaken at all stages of school education, along with capacity building of all stakeholders to be aligned to these goals and contribute in achieving them. Therefore, in this phase, states/UTs will essentially leverage all the resources of the past and all the resources prepared for the future to ensure continuity of quality and equitable education

Various focus areas and interventions for implementing this roadmap include:

- 1) Preventing drop outs, locating Out of School Children and mainstreaming them
- 2) Tracking children and their learning levels
- 3) Mitigating learning loss - Developing effective home-learning programmes and tracking learning
- 4) Helping teachers reach the last child in the last mile using multiple modes - portal, apps, telecast/broadcast, online/offline etc.
- 5) Teacher capacity building
- 6) Support to schools
- 7) Systematic involvement of parents, community, local self-governments, volunteers, etc.
- 8) Health and safety of teachers and students should be of paramount importance while designing any intervention

IV. PREVENTING DROP OUTS, LOCATING OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND MAINSTREAMING THEM

One of the biggest challenges for us right now is – possible drop in enrolment and increase in out of school children - due to various reasons associated with COVID impact, such as, reverse migration from urban to rural, private schools to public schools, and perhaps migration once again when the situation eases, etc.

Keeping in view the above perspective, the following action points are suggested:

1) **Role of Local Bodies**

- The Secretaries of School Education in all states/UTs to come out with joint circulars/letters with their counterpart Secretaries of Panchayati raj and Urban Development regarding their joint responsibilities for school education.
- States and UTs may spread awareness about the role of local bodies in identifying Out of School children, preventing drop-outs, mainstreaming migrant children, and ensuring continuity of learning using print, electronic, social media campaigns etc.
- Local bodies with the help of SMCs may ensure that all children are enrolled in school and strive for zero drop out at panchayat/village/ward levels, etc.
- A list of local volunteers, retired teachers/govt servants/youth may be prepared and they may be engaged for activity-based learning at habitation level.
- Local bodies can play a huge role in ensuring access to resources both digital and off line for students.
- Local bodies can monitor the delivery of text books and other resource material to students.
- They can organize webinar/quiz/debate and other activities for children by following Covid appropriate behavior.
- **A copy of the Joint letter issued by Secretaries as mentioned above maybe sent to DoSEL, MoE by 31.5.21**

2) **Nodal group at village/town level**

- States/UTs may consider forming a three-member Nodal Group at the Panchayat/village level for gathering information through community and other sources regarding drop outs/OoSC.
- This group can consist of one Panchayat/ULB member, one active member of the community, and one school teacher.
- This group will not be responsible for house-to-house survey, etc. This group will conduct community meetings and activate community, volunteers, etc. to provide information regarding drop outs/OoSC.

3) **Conduct of Door-to-Door/helpdesk-based/App-based survey to identify Out of School Children:**

- The States and UTs have already been requested to conduct this survey vide the Out of School Children Guidelines issued on 7th January 2021.
- In this regard, UNICEF has developed a Mobile App for surveying the children, which has been launched in J&K and which can be customized as per the requirements of the States and UTs. UNICEF is working with NIC to finalize the technical requirements of the App for national level roll out. The App would

enable aggregated data at national level and detailed data at state level. This would help in planning the targeted and timely intervention for the OoSC. The Mobile App is expected to be ready for roll out by the end of May.

- Meanwhile, the state of Karnataka has also rolled out an App for OoSC survey. The innovation in this App is that data of families registered with Fair Price Shops and data of student registry is pre-entered into the App. This enables quick verification of OoSC.
- States may consider either developing their own App or utilizing UNICEF App by customizing to state's requirements. The App may consider preloading data related to BPL families, Fair Price Shops, Adolescent girls registered in Anganwadis, etc. as per state/UT requirement to enable speedy survey. The state level APP/data will need to be connected to national level data through appropriate APIs.
- The efforts for identification of Out of School Children and student registry, as mentioned in para V below, may be merged.
- **All states/UTs should make efforts to complete this survey by 30th June, 2021.**

4) **Surveying local areas through Helpdesks**

- States/UTs can also consider innovative surveys for tracking drop outs and OoSC, such as, by setting up a Help desk in the Panchayat/school on given days and dates that are widely disseminated, in which any OOSC or his/her parents/guardians can come and register. This may also be safer in terms of the pandemic in some areas.

5) **Mainstreaming children above 14 years**

- For any reason if the child is not able to join regular school at higher secondary level, states/UTs may consider registering such children for secondary level exams in NIOS or in SIOS.
- NIOS has prepared resource material, particularly for the age group of 14 to 18 years, these resources are available at:
<https://nios.ac.in/online-course-material.aspx>

6) **Resources for mainstreaming Children:**

- NCERT is preparing bridge courses for mainstreaming children which can be adopted/adapted by the states. This will be made available to states by July, 2021.

- However, states/UTs may also consider developing their own bridge courses. The bridge courses need to be expanded grade wise by the SCERTs in states/UTs in the medium of instruction.
- NCERT/SCERTs may also develop and disseminate resources for CWSN children.
- Volunteers, self-help groups and community participation are a must for providing support to out of school children.
- Under Samagra Shiksha, special package can be developed for special training of OoSC to ensure the continuity of learning in pandemic period.
- **All states/UTs are requested to report details of Bridge Courses under preparation or under implementation to MoE, not later than May, 2021.**

V. TRACKING CHILDREN:

1) Setting-up State level Student Data Registry with aggregated reporting at national level:

- It has become necessary to track children through their enrolment, retention, transition, mainstreaming, drop out data. We cannot lose time on this anymore, therefore, it will be mandatory for every state/UT to maintain its own database of students.
- Data of students is maintained in different formats and systems across states. Most of such database work in silos, may not be as per standard specifications, and need to be updated from time to time.
- To ensure standardization and interoperability, it is necessary to create federated student registries in States and UTs for tracking each and every child enrolled in schools.
- The specifications and standards for such a registry for each student will be finalized and communicated by MoE. It is being developed as a building block under NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture).
- If not already doing so, each state/UT will have to diligently register each and every enrolled/mainstreamed/OoSC/migrated child against a school and grade by giving a unique ID. Several states/UTs are already doing this in a systematic manner, however, few are not doing it as systematically.
- It may be noted that states need not undo their existing systems for student data, however, states will need to onboard through APIs. Through API's the states will be able to send aggregated data to the national registry. Having common standards and specifications for registries will allow data to be aggregated at the national level.
- NIC will also be building a reference solution and states could also use the same, once ready.

- The States who so far have no system of student data base, and are undertaking the creation of new student registries for the first time, should ensure these are NDEAR compliant.
- **States/UTs are requested to report the details of Student Registry undertaken by them and further action plan in this regard to DoSEL/MoE not later than 31st May, 2021.**

2) National Registry:

- At the national level, only aggregated data of student registry will be required for the purpose of planning future interventions and understanding and analysing the present trends to be able to handhold states for remediation and other interventions.
- At the state level, fair amount of detailing will be required for the Student registry, however, not all details of students are needed at the central level. Therefore, a basic minimum template will be provided by MoE for the national level, and a suggestive one for the state level.
- On its side, MoE will initiate the following and complete the same in six months:
 - ✓ Prepare a way forward document on the Student Registry which would address various challenges, including unique ID for Students and provide tangible solutions on the same for states/UTs who do not already have such systems.
 - ✓ NDEAR will publish standards for those with existing Student registry systems to plug into the national student registry and those needing to update could leverage NIC's reference systems.

VI. MITIGATING LEARNING LOSS - DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE HOME-LEARNING PROGRAMMES AND TRACKING LEARNING

Given the rise of the second wave of Covid 19, majority of schools in the country have been forced to revert to a policy of indefinite school closure and continuing with home learning via textbooks, assignments, digital tools, etc. as the way forward. But, this time around, learning from last year can help us plan better and prevent further learning loss. We know that for a successful home learning program, it is important to ensure that in addition to sharing adequate resources with students (textbooks, worksheets, videos, assignments, tests, etc.), it is important to track whether the students are viewing/engaging with the content regularly.

Generally, there are 5 main phases in an effective home learning program. Thinking in terms of these 5 phases will help states/UTs design their program effectively and in a structured way. In

the following sections, we will discuss these buckets in greater depth, along with the challenges associated with them and recommended practices for states and educational institutions.

Main Phases in an effective home learning program:

- ✓ **Ensuring every child has access to grade appropriate textbooks**
- ✓ **Content identification that is Grade, subject and topic appropriate and content curation**
- ✓ **Content dissemination physically or through various platforms – WhatsApp, App, Website, TV, radio**
- ✓ **Content engagement**
- ✓ **Assessment of learning**
- ✓ **Tracking and monitoring – of data being collected to measure impact, such as, number of students reached in each class, number of teachers associated, general achievement levels, students requiring remediation, etc.**

1. ACCESS TO TEXTBOOKS

- All states/UTs will ensure that relevant textbooks of elementary level are printed and distributed through the school (if required, then at the doorstep) to every elementary level school going child.
- System for distribution of textbooks for students of secondary and senior secondary level may also be overseen by state/UT and ensured its smooth distribution.
- **Textbooks should reach all students enrolled in elementary schools latest by 31.5.21 for the academic session 2021-22.**

2. CONTENT CURATION:

- ✓ The first step to continue at home learning is for SCERTs/schools/teachers to identify and if required, curate content.
- ✓ Content needs to be both in physical form (for children who have no access to digital devices) and based on the various free digital e-learning platforms provided by MoE such as the DIKSHA portal (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing), MOOCs on SWAYAM, e-Pathshala, National Repository of Open Educational Resources, State Portals, Apps, TV, radio, Podcasts, etc.

To choose content, states/UTs may use the following parameters:

- ✓ Content should be mapped to concepts or competencies as per state/UT specified syllabus and/or learning outcomes. The document of Learning Outcomes mapped to

NCERT curriculum is available at:

http://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/Manuals/TeachersResource_LODoc.pdf

- ✓ Content should be vetted by SCERT/School/group of teachers
- ✓ For grades 1-8, animated or other videos, worksheets, quizzes, reading and reviewing, presentations, essays and creative writing, item banks are preferred; while for grades 9-12, content based on problem solving will be more useful.
- ✓ Content should be in local languages, and contextualized so that they are relatable to the students.
- ✓ Content should be interesting and student-facing where student is able to engage with the content on her own. Videos should not be more than 5-7 minutes long for grades 1-8, while for higher classes they should not be more than 15-20 minutes long.

Alternative Academic Calendar:

- ✓ Since this is the second consecutive year when schools are not opening, we need to focus on continuity of learning especially for the primary grade students. Moreover, online education is possible only for those children with devices.
- ✓ The Alternative Academic Calendar in its present form gives learning solutions for grades 1 to 12 for both - a child with device and one without device.
- ✓ It has been decided to strengthen the Alternative Academic Calendar by connecting item banks/assessment also with the Alternative Academic Calendar.

Example of content creation:

- ✓ In Himachal Pradesh, videos are created by the State Resources Groups (SRGs, a group of teachers selected for the purpose of curating & creating content) for each class. Daily worksheets were created on the basis of the videos that were shared for each class.
- ✓ The need for content around pedagogical aspects of home-based learning was also realized, and thus teacher facing content has been created as part of the CM-RISE teacher training program by Peepul in Madhya Pradesh.
- ✓ In Jharkhand and Maharashtra, videos were created to guide teachers on how to teach the particular competency of that day.
- ✓ In Rajasthan, 'e-Kaksha' content which was Rajasthan specific and taught by teachers from Rajasthan has now gained momentum.

3. CONTENT DISSEMINATION

- Technological access often leads to gaps in user uptake and engagement. The technological divide is even more serious if we consider the number of devices and children per

household, and the affordability, quality, and reliability of service in households with multiple learners in different grades. Due to these reasons, states can *deploy high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech* interventions in order to continue home learning initiatives across all sections of society.

- ***Availability of Supplementary graded material and resource kits:***
 - ✓ Since internet connectivity is still a major issue in most parts of the country, workbooks, worksheets, activity material and additional books for higher classes becomes all the more important for continuity of learning. States and UTs may prepare grade wise material and ensure their delivery to the students.
 - ✓ Activity and play based kits can also be prepared specially for ECCE to class III students to productively engage them in learning. SCERTs may prepare such material which will be useful for home-based learning.
 - ✓ Kits will be particularly useful for children located in remote areas, who have no access to digital formats.
- ***Creation of a multi-layered WhatsApp cascade:***
 - ✓ States can create a multi-layered WhatsApp cascade, where the curated content would flow from state department > district level > block-level > Panchayat > School Head Master/ Principal > Teachers > Parents (students). (Note - The exact structure for the flow of messages may vary from state to state.)
 - ✓ For example, in Madhya Pradesh, in order to disseminate content, the state created WhatsApp groups for every school, cluster and district: over 50 000 WhatsApp groups were created in a few days and have since been managed and monitored to ensure availability of digital learning content and learning plans to parents and students.
 - ✓ *Where cellphones are available to students:* The teachers can set a fixed time for content dissemination and conducting online classes. Informing parents about this fixed time has helped parents to set aside some time for students to use their phones for content consumption.
- ***DIKSHA and State-specific websites / apps:***
 - ✓ Many states have effectively used DIKSHA as the main digital content dissemination source. The advantage that DIKSHA provides is that it is a robust technology platform provided by the MoE. DIKSHA can handle huge volume and the state does not need to be concerned about scaling challenges.
 - ✓ States have also developed state-specific websites wherein students, parents and teachers are able to access all content here, neatly arranged on the basis of daily, weekly and monthly schedules. This ensures that even if students did not receive the content link through WhatsApp, the content was readily available. Students can even go back and view older content.

- ✓ In Jharkhand, where 24% of total enrolled students were reported to be connected through WhatsApp, 10.9% of these students have now moved onto the DigiSchool App for primary grades and 24.5% of students have now registered onto the Learnytic app for secondary grades.
- **Use of Television:**
 - ✓ Since a large number of Indian households have access to a television, it can be an effective means for delivering audiovisual content in households with or without internet access. Videos from DIKSHA, Gully Gully Sim Sim, TicTacLearn, etc., are available in public domain and can be stitched together to create episodes and can be aired on local/cable TV at a fixed time every day.
 - ✓ For example, in Uttar Pradesh, a 4-hour slot per day has been purchased by the Basic Shiksha department from Prasar Bharti. The available time slot (9 am to 1 pm) is divided into 8 slots of 30 minutes each to ensure that all grades are given equal importance in the dissemination strategy.
 - ✓ In Telangana, an in-house team of academic experts was leveraged to identify, train and support teachers and academic subject experts to develop and present TV lessons. In-house administrators and technicians with expertise in broadcast media and TV were leveraged to support the speedy deployment of education TV lessons for students.
- **Use of voice calling and Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS):**
 - ✓ State governments can use mobile phone pathways to reach students without an internet-enabled smartphone.
 - ✓ In Jharkhand, teachers were asked to call 10 students daily and converse with them about the content of that day and their mental well-being, for effective engagement.
 - ✓ In Maharashtra, a number was given to teachers and students on which they can give a missed call, post which they receive a call through IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System), and a story is narrated for free.
- **Use of Radio:**
 - ✓ Radio is believed to have extensive coverage across India, with government-owned All India Radio (AIR) claiming near-universal reach in rural areas.
 - ✓ Madhya Pradesh launched a daily 1.5-hour radio program from April 1 for Grades 1-8 - one hour in the morning for academic inputs and half hour in the evening for co-curricular and Social-Emotional Learning content. The programme's first story was narrated by the Chief Minister (CM) of Madhya Pradesh, in order to emphasize the importance of learning continuity.
 - ✓ In Uttar Pradesh, a 30-minute slot per day was purchased on Akashwani, during which 'English Seekho' audios from UNICEF were played on the radio.
 - ✓ In Gujarat and Maharashtra, few districts placed loudspeakers in the community and other public spaces, which were used to narrate stories and rhymes for students.

- **Examples to bridge the technology access gap:**
 - ✓ Some countries have responded to the technological access issues by providing devices (example, Italy, Lithuania) and wi-fi (example, Kenya), zero-rating access to e-learning sites (example, Jamaica, Jordan, Rwanda, South Africa), and preparing printed packages for students with no connectivity (e.g. Jamaica, Colombia). In Brazil, physical kits containing chalk, crayons, primers and curriculum specific guidelines to enable and aid parents to continue home based learning were distributed. The kits also contained textbooks and literature relevant for parents and caregivers on health and education.
 - ✓ In Nagaland, in order to support the educators/parents better in helping the students, the Directorate of School Education of Nagaland also created grade-wise DVDs/Pen Drives of the entire telecast, and distributed them to interested parents, teachers and schools at a nominal charge. Accessing the lessons at their convenience allowed for the revisiting and better understanding of the lessons for students (or educators/parents). Given the level of connectivity in the state, this was an appropriate option.
 - ✓ In Haryana, the state invited community members (parents, siblings, neighbors, extended family, etc.) as 'Shiksha Mitra' and requested them to volunteer their cellphones for students to undertake learning during a dedicated time on a daily basis. 1,300,000 *Shiksha Mitra* have registered so far, 76% of which are parents. Student participation in quizzes increased noticeably after this initiative.
 - ✓ In Maharashtra, some districts started a "Donate a Device" campaign, in which the district officials urged people to donate their used smart devices (phone, tablets, laptops, etc) to students. In Nashik, more than 4,500 devices were donated to students of government schools.
 - ✓ In Kerala, all forms of CSR and government funding was pooled (including MLA and local body funds) to provide devices to all students in higher grades.
- **School Library Books should be made accessible.**
 - ✓ It is noticed that though most schools now have libraries, the books remain unborrowed during the pandemic.
 - ✓ States/UTs must ensure that each and every Library Book in the school reaches the homes of children – at least one new book a month – and children get into the habit of reading. Teachers can review the knowledge acquired either online or as and when the schools reopen.
 - ✓ **The circular/letter issued by states to schools in the state (both public and private) in this regard may be shared with DoSEL latest by 15th May, 2021.**

4. CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

- Students learn not by passively consuming content but through active engagement and scaffolded support. Sustained usage by students is important if we want to move towards improved learning outcomes. The main challenge that states face is sustaining student engagement, particularly with regard to digital content. Digital content is mostly a one-way flow of information and teachers are still learning on best engagement practices in the given scenario.
- It is observed that many remote learning programs do not always pay enough attention to instructional pace; pathways for student practice; checks for understanding and feedback loops to support home learning.
- However, such learnings of the past can now be used to design effective programs that couple practice with timely and meaningful feedback.
- Teachers to visit students at least once in a week, with a brief plan of interaction with students and parents, particularly in far-flung and remote areas where access to digital devices is minimal.
- The following are five key activities that states can undertake to improve student engagement:
 - ✓ **Push from every side:** Involve local self-government, local MLA, MP, state administration at the top levels, etc. to give positive messaging about the need to continue learning from home and how to do it.
 - ✓ **High energy activities:** Quizzes, presentations, fun activities, etc. Maharashtra held virtual summer camps using DIKSHA portal
 - ✓ **Parental engagement:** Messaging, video conferencing, e-PTMs, involving relatives/neighbours
 - ✓ **Peer groups to assist students:** This is a very effective method of group learning; inter peer group quizzes and other competitions can also be held
 - ✓ **Recognition:** of high-performing teachers will go a long way in enhancing our efforts
- An important factor that keeps students engaged in learning is exposure to peers. A classroom setting provides the opportunity for one-to-one discussions or problem solving with classmates, which has been documented to have a huge positive impact on students' learning journey. These are not exactly possible to replicate in an e-learning environment. However, small peer groups of about five children each can be formed who remain in touch through digital modes or face-to-face if the situation permits. Motivated students who can take ownership of their learning are believed to always outperform those who have been forced into a box.

5. ASSESSMENT

- Improving student learning is one of the most important goals of education. The insights gained through assessments can serve as a major driving factor for making informed policy decisions, resource allocation, and instructional practice in support of improved learning outcomes.
- Following are three key steps that states should take to use assessments as a means to improve learning outcomes:
 - ✓ Creation of assessment banks based on learning outcomes as a support for teachers and parents; conducting regular quizzes
 - ✓ Remedial content should be kept ready and disbursed to students who do not achieve the benchmark in activities like regular quizzes
 - ✓ Each teacher should be given specific responsibility of a particular set of students. Each teacher will then be responsible for teaching, tracking and assessing only those students.
- **Bridge Courses**
 - ✓ One of the important interventions for bridging the learning gap is a Bridge Course.
 - ✓ States/UTs may develop these for all levels.
 - ✓ Bridge Course documents should be volunteer friendly at elementary levels, so that the network of volunteers can be tapped for focusing on individual or small groups of children.
- **States/UTs may send report of number and kind of Bridge Courses developed, and assessment reforms initiated/planned to be initiated by 31.5.21.**
- **Assessment Reforms:**
 - ✓ As states continue to think about at-home learning models, it might be beneficial to develop a clear statement of the purpose for creating an assessment program for elementary level, eventually leading to assessment pattern reforms based on the NEP 2020.
 - ✓ The decision to move forward with the assessment must be followed by a definition of '*what to assess*', and '*how to assess it*'. If there are no expectations about what students are expected to know or not know, it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of remote learning.
 - ✓ The present pandemic has also provided opportunity to relook and revamp our assessment system at secondary and senior secondary levels. The time has come when we objectively analyze our exam centric assessment system, particularly, the Board exams.

- ✓ CBSE has already initiated the process; States/UTs may also take the lead and initiate exam reforms by their State Boards.

6. TRACKING & MONITORING

- Keeping track of data being collected is the main driving force of any program. While assessment and testing are some of the most important aspects of the educational programs, monitoring these learning behaviors and outcomes is key to informing education policy and to course-correct over time.
- For the purpose of tracking the learning, states/UTs are expected to undertake the following:
 - ✓ **Identify metrics:** List of a common set of metrics may be arrived at on the basis of content type, mediums of disseminations, user types, etc.
 - ✓ **Measure Outcomes:** Identify the tools that will be used to measure the achievement of learning outcomes, such as, Rubrics, Checklist, Group work, Peer assessment, Evaluation of tests/worksheets, Grading/rating Guide, Presentation, Portfolio, etc.
 - ✓ **Analysis and feedback:** analysing data and drawing inferences for taking informed decisions about further course of action for preparing best-fit for the learner to achieve learning goals
- **Key Challenges:** States might face major roadblocks when trying to collect reliable data - for instance, not much data is available for TV viewership and radio shows. Due to this, they may have to rely on data reported by teachers or parents, through surveys, Google forms, etc. This will also require a high time investment.
- **Examples where states were able to resolve these issues:**
To counter this, Haryana launched *Avsar*, a mobile app in October 2020 to streamline monitoring and reporting on home learning. A quiz is released during the telecast of video content on EDUSAT; this records the number of students watching EDUSAT. Similarly, in order to streamline the collection and analysis of data, the *Samiksha* app was created to record aspects, such as, academic observations during school/monitoring visits, daily recording of temperature, student attendance, and reporting of COVID cases, etc. It is also used by mentors to observe WhatsApp groups of a given class, and call teachers and *Shiksha Mitra* to mentor them. The observations and findings of mentors are recorded on the Saksham Samiksha app by filling one form every day.

VII. HELPING TEACHERS TO REACH THE LAST CHILD IN THE LAST MILE

1) Setting up Control and Command Centre at State level:

- At the State/UT level, all states may establish a Control and Command Centre (CCC) for teachers and schools to keep track of enrolled students, learning at home, Drop outs,

information on child labour mainstreamed, Out of School Children, textbook delivery, support required by teachers and schools, etc.

- This CCC will also respond to queries of teachers and schools with regard to content requirements, assessment issues, child tracking issues, etc.
- This may function during office hours on working days.
- A dedicated group of people including academics and administrators maybe given charge of this CCC, to facilitate and provide a targeted and timely intervention for OoSC. In addition, command centres can even be transmitted to the district level also.
- The academics in the CCC will be especially helpful in guiding teachers who require help with content or lesson plans, etc.
- The contact details of CCC and its timings may be conveyed to all schools and all teachers.

2) The States/UTs may also consider having a helpline or IVRS for students and parents for some time.

- This helpline could be of great help to students and parents w.r.t tracking textbooks, worksheets, solving queries, getting information on digital modes, etc.
- The CCC and Helplines should cater to both, public as well as private schools.

VIII. TEACHER CAPACITY BUILDING

- The most important role in these difficult times will be played by the teachers. Hence, capacity building of teachers to address learning loss and involvement of community and self-help groups is also crucial.
- Teachers also need to be trained on teaching and assessment through digital modes.
- After the successful conduct of NISHTHA training for elementary teachers at DIKSHA platform, MoE will continue the same and extend the training to secondary teachers this year. Further, a specialized training on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) will be provided to teachers from ECCE to primary grades.
- However, it is expected that states/UTs will also undertake their own capacity building programs in online mode for their teachers on various aspects related to teaching and learning in pandemic times. States/UTs can utilize DIKSHA platform for this purpose if they do not have their own Learning Management System (LMS) platforms.
- States/UTs may also like to conduct a quick training needs survey, if required.

IX. SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS

1) Support under Samagra Shiksha:

- Samagra Shiksha being an integrated centrally sponsored scheme for school education will be pivotal in delivering the objective of access to quality education for all. The scheme has many interventions for providing assistance to the States and UTs for Out of School Children and Children enrolled in schools. Some of the interventions can be targeted to ensure continuity of learning and access to supplementary material for each and every child.
- Following components of Samagra Shiksha can be built into special and focused interventions in view of the present pandemic situation:
 - a. Learning enhancement/enriching programme to provide supplementary material to children
 - b. Library grant to be utilized for ensuring availability of reading material to students
 - c. Special Training for OoSC and CWSN.
 - d. Support for out of school children of age group 16 to 19 years belonging to SEDG through NIOS/State open schools.
 - e. SMC training to be utilized for ensuring community participation, parental support
 - f. Teaching learning Material at ECCE and primary grade may be utilized for FLN kit which can be prepared by the NCERT/SCERT
 - g. MMMER funds can also be utilized for setting-up a help desk at Panchayat level and creating awareness among masses, through use of mass media. It can also be used for conducting online learning and content dissemination over electronic media.
 - h. Child tracking funds may be utilized for preparing student registry in NDEAR compliant mode
 - i. Special Grants to schools for sanitization and hygiene even for limited opening/attendance of teachers etc.
 - j. Teachers grants for awareness on safety and security in online mode and for enabling them to use online means of education.
 - k. Grants for online content development and dissemination.
 - l. In-service training grants for teachers for accessing NISHTHA training modules over DIKSHA platform.
 - m. Composite school grants to be used by the schools flexibly to ensure continuity of learning and at least 10% of it to be used for Water, sanitation and hygiene in schools.

2) Sharing and dissemination of Best Practices:

- A system needs to be put in place for periodic collation and dissemination of the many good practices within the States and UTs related to school education during the pandemic. Teachers and schools will draw a great deal of inspiration from these.
- The DoSEL is also compiling some of the innovative practices of the State and UTs, and the same shall be disseminated to the states/UTs.

- States/UTs are once again requested to send the details called for vide letter dated 1.2.2021 and upload on the enlisted Google Tracker, not later than May, 2021.
- States/UTs are also requested to send self-certified videos/case studies/testimonials/write-ups related to innovative practices for Shagun repository and also disseminate the same through social media.

X. SYSTEMATIC INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS, COMMUNITY, LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS, VOLUNTEERS, ETC.

1) Guidelines for engagement with parents and community, etc.

- Community participation is very important especially at the elementary level and particularly for the lower primary level.
- Community volunteers (such as NYKS & NSS) and other motivated members of the community, including alumni, mothers, parents, retired teachers, etc. can play an important role in providing support to children in their learning activities. This becomes more important in a scenario where some parents are unable to support children in academic activities.
- Consider appointing volunteers as mentors who can be assigned to a specific group of children. Even if these volunteers are not able to take up teaching/guidance activities for education, they can become a huge socio-emotional support base for the children.
- Odisha has involved alumni in a big way in schools.
- The draft Guidelines for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy have been circulated to all states/UTs.
- Chapter 14 gives detailed guidelines for engagement with parents, community, local self-governments, volunteers, etc.
- States/UTs may either adopt or adapt these and issue their own guidelines so that teachers and students have systematic support at the local level.

2) Portal/App for inviting voluntary activities:

- Several states have created Apps (example, Karnataka, Odisha) or portals where CSR/voluntary contribution to schools and students can be given. All states/UTs are encouraged to develop systems for this.
- The revamped Vidyanjali portal of MoE will also be shortly be launched. This portal will connect schools across the country to access and encourage voluntary activity. States/UTs will be free to use this portal.

3) Training of SMC/SMDC

- States/UTs may prepare systematic plans to train SMC/SMDC members on all aspects of teaching and learning, including learning goals and outcomes, during pandemic in which SMC/SMDC can be actively engaged to support the system.

4) Support for mental well-being of the Students:

The pandemic has also taken a toll on the mental health of the students. MoE has launched Manodarpan to provide psycho-social support to the students.

States and UTs may consider following activities to further ensure sound mental health of children:

- Reading, exercise, yoga, healthy habits may be promoted among children and parents should be made aware about the psychological needs of children and being more communicative with them. To create sensitivity and awareness among parents, interactions maybe held with them taking the support of counselors/community members.
- Conduct of peer-to-peer sessions to express their feelings freely and build a support system
- Involve parents in the teaching-learning process.
- Use various digital modes for sensitizing parents about their role in giving mental/emotional support to their children and being able to recognize signs of distress.
- Online group counselling sessions for students wherever possible.
- Doing a lot of interesting class/group activities, such as, preparation of class magazines by all children in the class, exhibiting of individual talent through various modes, encouraging children to participate in any form of creative expressions, such as, essay writing, painting, poetry, storytelling, etc. and using this as a medium of expression of feelings by children.
- **Action taken by the states/UT in this regard may be communicated to DoSEL/MoE by 31.5.21**

5) Support for fitness and health

- States/UTs may like to prepare age-appropriate basic growth and health parameters that can be easily monitored at home, and disseminate to the parents, so that parents can take the responsibility of caring for this aspect.

6) School wise and grade wise Parents/Mothers Action group

- It is essential to have full support of parents during these difficult times. However, where both parents need to go out for work, a class wise action group of parents who can give their time, will be very effective.
- This group can take the responsibility of disseminating resources, becoming the link between teacher/school and students, guiding peer groups, undertaking activities, etc.

XI. INCLUSION

- Under Samagra Shiksha, stipend is given to CWSN girl child. This will need to be tracked and ensured.
- No child, including CWSN, should be left behind in terms of textbooks, enrolment, learning resources and learning guidance.
- In Aspirational Districts and remote areas where digital modes or even teachers are not able to reach very often, local level volunteers, including parents, maybe identified and trained if necessary, to guide the children.
- States can consider pre-loading existing devices available in schools with educational material and sending them to remote areas, where trained volunteers can lead the process of guidance.

XII. HEALTH AND SAFETY OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SHOULD BE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE WHILE DESIGNING ANY INTERVENTION

- The DoSEL Guidelines/SOP on Health and safety and Learning with social distancing may be consulted in this regard.
- States/UTs may issue their own guidelines for this purpose, if not already done.
- A training module on COVID responsive behaviour in schools and outside and launched on DIKSHA platform in this regard. All teachers, heads of schools, BRC, CRC, SMC members and other officials may be encouraged to undergo this programme.
- All activities undertaken during the MAINTAIN phase in particular, must be built around health and safety protocols for both students and teachers.

XIII. WAY FORWARD

- The idea is to come up with an action plan which can be rolled out in a phased manner starting with identification to tracking of learning outcomes.
- States/UTs may consider coming out with a common grade wise weekly plan of learning, tracking, assessment, etc. to guide the teachers and to give more systematic support to students.
- A COVID Response action plan with corresponding timelines (timelines may be adjusted to some extent by the states/UTs based on local pandemic situation) with respect to all Stakeholders involved is given in the table below:

COVID RESPONSE - ROADMAP FOR 2021

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021		
		Action plan	Time Line	
MAINTAIN Phase	Ministry of Education			
	1.	Prepare a blue print document on the Student Registry addressing the various challenges and provide tangible solutions (format, unique ID to students/Aadhar Seeding etc.) (To be led by Chairperson CBSE)	May, 2021	
	2.	Aligning Samagra Shiksha funds for special focused interventions as mentioned in Para IX (1)	May, 2021	
	3.	Launch of Mobile App for survey of OoSC	May-June, 2021	
	4.	Identifying resources for OoSC including alternative modes of learning	Throughout the year	
	5.	Write to Chief Secretaries all States and UTs to involve DMs in the identification and mainstreaming of OoSC	May, 2021	
	6.	Dissemination of State/UT specific Good Practices through Social Media	Throughout the year	
	7.	Development of a National level database for OoSC	Based on states/UTs surveys	
	8.	Relaunch of new Vidyanjali Portal	June, 2021	
	9.	Capacity Building of Teachers	From July, 2021 onwards	
	10.	Guidelines for engagement with parents and community	July, 2021	
11.	Tracking of children through Student Registry	From 2022-23 onwards		

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021		
		Action plan	Time Line	
	State and UTs			
	1.	Development and dissemination of a common grade-wise weekly plan of learning, tracking, assessment, etc. to guide the teachers and to give more systematic support to students.	May-June 2021	
	2.	Issue joint letter with Departments of Panchayati Raj and Urban Development regarding joint responsibility of school education and preparing a list of volunteers, etc.	May, 2021	
	3.	Issue detailed instruction to local bodies about their role in prevention of drop out and ensure implementation of the same	May 2021	
	4.	Upload documentation of innovative practices on Google Tracker as requested by DoSEL vide letter dated 1.2.2021	May 2021	
	5.	Local self-government to help prepare a list of volunteers attached to each school	May-June 2021	
	6.	Issue circular to ensure that each and every Library Book in the school (both public & private) reaches the homes of children – at least one new book a month. Copy of circular to be shared with MOE.	May 2021	
	7.	Report details of Student Registry to MOE	May, 2021	
	8.	Access to Textbooks for academic session 2021-22- especially to all students at elementary level	May, 2021	
	9.	Development of OoSC App or adaptation of UNICEF App	May 2021	
	10.	Survey of OoSC	May-June, 2021	

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021	
		Action plan	Time Line
	11.	Appoint Nodal group of members at Village/Town level for preventing drop-outs and identifying OoSC	May-June, 2021
	12.	Establish a Control and Command Centre (CCC) at state level - dedicated group of people including academics.	May-June, 2021
	13.	Disseminate basic health parameters that can be monitored at home to parents	June 2021
	14.	Form school/grade wise Parents/Mothers Action groups	June 2021
	15.	Identify and train volunteers to act as guides/teachers in remote areas including aspirational districts	June 2021
	16.	Initiate Assessment Reforms at elementary level	May, 2021 onwards
	17.	Initiate Assessment Reforms at Secondary level	2021-22
	18.	Send report of number and kind of Bridge Courses developed/being developed	May, 2021
	19.	Create teachers' groups with CRC/BRC/Districts/State and students' groups with teachers/schools on any social media platform for better communication	May, 2021
	20.	Send report of assessment reforms initiated	June, 2021
	21.	Develop guidelines for parental and community involvement in school education, access and retention	June, 2021
	22.	Attach identified members of community and volunteers (such as NYKS & NSS), Self-help groups and motivated people, to schools for giving support to all educational and MAINTAIN phase activities	June, 2021 onwards

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021	
		Action plan	Time Line
		by the school.	
	23.	Involvement and support of local bodies, local MLA, MP, parental engagement, peer groups, etc. for high energy activities and recognition of high performing teachers.	June, 2021 onwards
	24.	Ensure visits of teachers/volunteers in areas where access to digital means is minimal	Throughout the year
	25.	Preparation and dissemination of supplementary graded material and resource kits through digital and offline modes	July 2021
	26.	Schools may consider creation of Peer groups or small groups of children led by a volunteer/community member	July 2021
	27.	Regularly collate and share with MOE state/UT specific good practices	Throughout the year
	28.	Initiate Student Registry in all States and UTs	July, 2021
	29.	Capacity building of Teachers to address learning loss	July, 2021 onwards
	30.	Collaboration with Ministry of Labour for identification and mainstreaming of OoSC	On immediate basis
	31.	Training of SMC/SMDC members on all aspects of teaching and learning during pandemic	July- September, 2021
	32.	Adopt/adapt Bridge courses developed by NCERT for mainstreaming children	August, 2021
	33.	Tracking of children through Student Registry	October, 2021
	34.	Involve Gram Panchayats for identifying Drop Outs and OoSC in	October, 2021

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021		
		Action plan	Time Line	
		campaign mode		
	35.	Issue guidelines on health & safety of Teachers and Students	October, 2021	
	36.	Develop Portal/App for inviting voluntary activities	October, 2021	
	37.	All teachers, school heads, SMC members, education officials to complete training programme on COVID responsive behavior launched on DIKSHA.	October 2021	
	38.	State to develop a mechanism for sharing innovative practices of schools/teachers across the state/UT.	October 2021	
	NCERT			
	1.	Strengthen Alternative Academic Calendars with item banks based on Learning Outcomes, and detailed clarifications for children with devices and children without devices.	May-June, 2021	
	2.	Capacity Building of Teachers – Foundational and Secondary level	From July onwards	
	3.	Development of kits for FLN and other resource material	June-July 2021	
	4.	Develop and share with states/UTs bridge courses for mainstreaming children	July, 2021	
	5.	Developing item banks mapped to learning outcomes for all grades	October, 2021	
	NIOS			
	1.	NIOS to prepare resource material and focus on children of age group of 14 to 18 to bring them into the fold of school education	July 2021	

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021		
		Action plan	Time Line	
RESTORE Phase	Ministry of Education			
	1.	National Achievement Survey	November 2021	
	2.	Roll out of National Student Registry	2021-22	
	3.	Assessment Reforms	2021-22	
	States and UTs			
	1.	Assessment Reforms	2021-22	
	2.	Roll out bridge courses	2021-22	
	3.	Continue supporting students for their mental and physical well-being	2021-22	
	4.	Introduce pedagogical reforms based on 5+3+3+4	2021-22	
	5.	Setting-up State level Student Data Registry with aggregated reporting at national level	2021-22	
	6.	Content curation and upload on various digital e-learning platforms provided by MoE as well as States	2021-22	
	7.	Content dissemination through <i>high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech</i> interventions in order to continue home learning initiatives across all sections of society (Use of Radio, Television, WhatsApp, IVR, etc.)	2021-22	
	8.	Tracking & Monitoring- identify metrics, measure outcomes, analysis & feedback	2021-22	
	CBSE			
1.	Assessment Reforms	2021-22		

Level	Sl. No.	Plan of Action/Roadmap 2021		
		Action plan	Time Line	
GROW Phase	MOE and States & UTs			
	1.	Monitoring & Review and updation of Action Plans	January-March, 2022	
	2.	Ensure retention and transition and continuity in schools	2022-23	
	3.	Hold state/district/school level assessments for tracking learning levels	2022-23	
	4.	Undertake Learning Enhancement initiatives	2022-23	
