

Cabinet approves Rs. 5718 crore World Bank aided project STARS (14.10.2020)

For Improving School Education

14 October 2020

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the following:

- Implementation of the **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS)** project with a total project cost of Rs 5718 crore with the financial support of World Bank amounting to US \$ 500 million (approximately Rs. 3700 crore).
- STARS project would be implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. (MOE)
- Setting up and support to the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH as an independent and autonomous institution under Department of School Education and Literacy, MOE.

The project covers 6 States namely Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha. The identified States will be supported for various interventions for improving the quality of education. Besides this project, it is also envisaged to implement a similar ADB funded project in 5 states namely Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Assam. All states will partner with one other state for sharing their experiences and best practices.

The STARS project seeks to support the states in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving interventions with direct linkages to improved education outcomes and school to work transition strategies for improved labour market outcomes. The overall focus and components of the STARS project are aligned with the objectives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Quality Based Learning Outcomes.

The Project envisions improving the overall monitoring and measurement activities in the Indian School Education System through interventions in selected states. The project shifts focus from the provision of inputs and maintaining of outputs to actual outcomes by linking the receipt and disbursement of funds to these outcomes.

The STARS Project has two major components:

- 1) At the national level, the project envisages the following interventions which will benefit all states and UTs:
 - To strengthen MOE's national data systems to capture robust and authentic data on retention, transition and completion rates of students.

- To support MOE in improving states PGI scores by incentivizing states governance reform agenda through SIG (State Incentive Grants).
- To support the strengthening of learning assessment systems.
- To support MOE's efforts to establish a National Assessment Center (PARAKH). Among the tasks of such a center would be to leverage the experiences of states selected for the operation by collecting, curating and sharing these experiences with other states through online portals (e.g. Shagun and DIKSHA), social and other media engagement, technical workshops, state visits and conferences.

Further, the STARS project includes a Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) under the National Component which would enable it to be more responsive to any natural, man-made and health disasters. It will help the government respond to situations leading to loss of learning such as school closures/infrastructure damage, inadequate facilities and use technology for facilitating remote learning etc. The CERC component would facilitate the rapid re-categorization of financing and the utilization of streamlined financing request procedures.

2) At the State level, the project envisages:

- Strengthening Early Childhood Education and Foundational Learning
- Improving Learning Assessment Systems
- Strengthening classroom instruction and remediation through teacher development and school leadership
- Governance and Decentralized Management for Improved Service Delivery.
- Strengthening Vocational education in schools through mainstreaming, career guidance and counselling, internships and coverage of out of school children

The STARS project also aims to focus on initiatives of PM e-Vidya, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission and National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

Some of the measurable outcomes of the project are Increase in students achieving minimum proficiency in grade 3 language in selected states, Improvement in secondary school completion rate, Improvement in governance index scores, Strengthened learning assessment systems, Partnerships developed to facilitate cross-learning between states, and improvement in the State level service delivery such as Strengthening planning and management capacities for decentralized management by training of BRCs and CRCs, Strengthened school management by training of Head Teachers and Principals for improved education service delivery.

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