

Cabinet approves education reforms

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad with HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi on Thursday.V. Sudershan

Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar on Thursday announced that the Cabinet has approved a slew of reforms for school education in the country, in what could be considered as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-2 project.

The SSA, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and teacher training would be integrated into a single scheme from Classes 1 to 12. The integrated scheme will be in place from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2020, with an estimated allocation of Rs. 75,000 crore over the period, a 20% increase over the current allocation.

It aims to support the States in universalising access to school education from pre-nursery to Class 12 across the country. Mr. Javadekar said the government would focus on educationally backward districts, disabled students and women.

There would be a shift to digital blackboards from Class 9 to college education in the next five years. The government will provide a 20% incentive to the States for a learning-outcome based education.

Mr. Javadekar said that skill courses — which are now functional from Class 9 to Class 12 — would begin from Class 6 in future. This was aimed at enhancing the employability of students.

The Centre has also approved an increase in the outlay for making educational loans interest-free for students with modest financial means for studying in universities and colleges charging high fees. The interest subsidy will last till one year of their passing out of college.

Mr. Javadekar said that while this was a 2009 scheme, the allocation of Rs. 6, 600-crore over the next three years marked nearly a three-fold jump over the allocations made from 2009 to 2014.

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