

'OVER 40% GOVT. SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE ELECTRICITY'

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Education and related issues

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (HRD) has severely criticised the government for the “dismal” rate of progress in building classrooms, labs and libraries to strengthen government higher secondary schools.

In its report on the 2020-2021 demand for grants for school education submitted to the Rajya Sabha last week, the Committee said out of 2,613 sanctioned projects for 2019-20, only three had been completed in the first nine months of the financial year, and warned that such delays would alienate students from government schools.

The report said in government higher secondary schools, not a single additional classroom had been built by December 31, 2019, although 1,021 had been sanctioned for the financial year 2019-20, according to data from the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2017-18 survey.

Only three laboratories had been built — one each for physics, chemistry and biology — despite sanctioned funds for 1,343 labs. Although 135 libraries and 74 art/craft/culture rooms had been sanctioned, none had been built with just three months left in the financial year.

No boundary wall

Almost 40% of schools did not have a boundary wall, endangering the safety of students and school property. Overall, for the core Samagra Shiksha Scheme, the department had only spent 71% of revised estimates by December 31, 2019.

The panel recommended that the HRD Ministry collaborate with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to construct boundary walls, and work with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy so that schools have access to power.

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