

School Education In Our Islands

The National policy on Education aims at ensuring free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to 14 years of age. Keeping this as the main thrust area, the objective of the department of education is to provide primary school within 1.0 Km of every habitation with a population of 150 or above. Non-Formal Education Centres have been provided in remote habitations where primary schools are not available.

There are 396 schools in A & N Islands spread over 36 Islands. Of these, 306 are managed by the Department of Education, 02 by Kendriya Vidhyalaya Sangatan, 02 by Navodaya Vidhyalaya Samiti, 2 are aided schools, 02 schools are maintained by Municipal Council and 71 are privately managed schools. In 2003 the Zilla Parishad in collaboration with Vivekananda Kendra has established 5 primary schools at Port Mout, Kadamatala, Basantipur, Pahalgaon and Diglipur.

Out of 306 Govt. schools, 24 are in tribal areas. All these Schools have a total of 85267 students including 6018 tribal students as on 30.09.2008. Education is provided in five mediums viz, English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Bengali. All the Sr. Secondary and Secondary schools are affiliated to CBSE. The percentage of girl students is 48.38 and percentage of female teachers is 56.62%. There are 4726 teachers in the schools. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:18.

The Administration is making all out efforts to increase enrolment and retention at school. Following incentives are provided to all the tribal students and students belonging to BPL families:

- Free textbooks, notebooks, stationery, uniforms and school bags.
- Cooked mid-day meal to the students of classes I-VIII.
- Snacks to the students of Pre-Primary classes
- Hostel stipends to hostelers at the rate of Rs.300/- per month.
- Free travel concession to those students who attend schools situated at a distance of 4 Km from their residence.
- Reservation of seats in professional/higher courses in various institutions of Mainland.
- Post Matric scholarship for tribal students studying in Mainland.
- Post Matric scholarship for class XI to XII to tribal students.
- Scholarship and financial assistance to pursue higher studies on mainland.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

To cater to the educational, physical, nutritional and psychological needs of a child in the age group of 3-6 years, department provides Pre-Primary Education through Pre-Primary classes attached to the schools. At present 6255 children are attending the Pre-Primary classes including 22 independent Pre-Primary schools managed by the private bodies.

Improvement in Academic Inputs

Students of these Islands have achieved pass percentage of 85.85% and 53.04% result in Class XII and Class X Board examination respectively conducted by CBSE in March 2009. To further improve the academic performance of the students

department is taking steps to encourage healthy competitive spirits among the student (i) By felicitating 5 toppers in the CBSE board exams (ii) Arranging extra coaching/remedial teaching classes wherever necessary (iii) Conducting regular tests.

District Institute of Education & Training is functioning in its new campus at Garacharama with objective of development of course content, Pre-service and In-service training to teachers. It is also conducting a 2 years Junior Basic Training Course (JBT).

State Institute of Education is functioning to focus on Secondary and Senior Secondary education with the primary objective of curriculum development, supervision & inspection, in-service training of teachers and development of teaching methodology and examination & evaluation reforms. Seminar and workshops are organized with the help of National Institutions such as CBSE, NCERT, NIEPA, CCRT and RIE.

Community participation

Village Education Committees (VEC) have been constituted at Panchayat, Block and District Level. These have been entrusted with the responsibility of overall development of schools of their respective areas and ensure participation of every child in primary education with the community participation.

PRIs are actively involved in pre-primary and NFE schemes. Manpower for manning the pre-primary and NFE centers are selected by Panchayats only. To increase the feeling of involvement in the schooling Watch & Ward staff (SCC) in primary schools are also selected through the Panchayat. Supervision of Mid-day Meals programme is also entrusted to PRI Members.

Mid-day Meals is provided to all children in the Elementary classes i.e. class I to VIII and students of EGS and AIE centres by drawing free rice under central scheme of NPNSPE. Total numbers of children benefited are 47207. Cooked meals is supplied by women SHG's failing which by other tenderers.

Science Education

The Science Unit of the Directorate arranged orientation programme for science teachers, science seminars, science quiz programmes, mathematics Millennium seminars islands quiz competition and parliament quiz competitions were arranged for students at state level to inculcate awareness and competitive spirit amongst the students. Science and craft exhibitions at school level and zonal level in which a number of craft items and science models, all prepared by students, are displayed.

IED (Integrated Education for Disabled)

Considering the needs of special education for the disadvantaged and physically challenged children under the "**Integrated Education for Disabled**", 27 IED Centres in different schools are functioning. The department attempts to integrate such children into the normal school system wherever feasible.

Library Services

A state Library at Port Blair is functioning with more than 83,000 books in 9 languages and 13,567 readers/members. To address the needs of rural population in and around South Andaman a Mobile Library Services has been introduced in Port Blair. One District Library at Car Nicobar and 17 Zonal Libraries are functioning with a view to promote reading habits among the public.

Adult Education

Education department is taking all efforts to decrease gender gap in education. The percentage of girls' enrolment in schools at present is 48.38. The department has also introduced a scheme under SSA to provide free textbooks to all girl students who are not covered under any other state schemes.

The literacy rates for Andaman & Nicobar Islands as per the 2001 census is 81.308%. Gender wise literacy rates are 86.33 and 75.24 for male and females respectively. The Adult Education programme is being implemented to increase the literacy rates further towards achieving target of total literacy.

Few new JSN, (Jan Sikhsan Nilayam) and Non-formal Education Centers are proposed with emphasis on making literacy campaign multifaceted combining the hygiene, family planning and other social causes, as the part of the curriculum. At present 33 JSN are functioning in these islands.

The scheme, re-christened as EGS/AIE i.e Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education under the SSA has been launched for more active participation of community in eradicating literacy.

Computer Education

Computer Education has been introduced in 16 Senior Secondary Schools covering 11,538 students. During the current year 12 more school are to be covered and the scheme will be introduced in all the Senior Secondary school in a phased manner under the current plan period.

Enhancement of Merit in Student from Rural and Tribal Areas

Under the scheme "Enhancement of Merit in Students from Rural and Tribal Areas" numbers of seats have been increased to 75 this year from 50. Under the scheme, students selected on the basis of talent search exams at class VIII are brought to Port Blair and given education in the schools in the medium of their choice with free boarding and lodging facilities.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated 'flagship programme' of Govt. of India to attain Universal Elementary Education (UEE) covering the entire country in a mission mode. SSA has been launched in 2001-2002 in partnership with the State Governments and local self-governments. The programme aims to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children of 6 to 14 age group by 2010. It is an initiative to universalize and improve quality of education through decentralized and context-specific planning and a process based on time bound implementation strategy. This programme lays emphasis on bridging all gender and social category gaps at elementary education level with time bound objectives. On one hand SSA is a programme with its own targets, norms and process and on the other it is an umbrella programme covering other programmes like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Lok Jumbish, Operation Blackboard, etc. The Gigantic dimensions of the programme and the financial implications call for meticulous planning and a rigorous appraisal.

Focused Goals of SSA

- ❖ All children belonging to 6-14 years age are to be enrolled in schools /EGS or AIE centres through bridge course 2005.
- ❖ Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- ❖ Universal retention by 2010.
- ❖ Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

Source: Directorate of Education