

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

RAJYA SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION No - 12
ANSWERED ON 07/12/2022**

Closing down of rural schools

12 Shri Derek O' Brien:

Will the Minister of **EDUCATION** be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of rural schools that have been closed down during and post pandemic i.e 2019-2022; and
- (b) various steps being taken to prioritise their reopening?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) & (b) Education is in the Concurrent list of the Constitution and the opening and merger/closing of schools are within the purview of respective State Government and UT Administration. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 provides children's access to elementary schools within the defined area or limits of neighbourhood. In pursuance to Section 6 of the RTE Act, all States have notified area or limits of their neighbourhood norms. Further, Section 8 of the RTE Act, 2009 also mandates that the appropriate government shall provide free and compulsory elementary education to every child and will ensure availability of neighbourhood schools.

Further, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) vide their order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 30th September, 2020 has stated that State/UT Governments may take a decision in respect of re-opening of schools, after 15th October, 2020, in a graded manner, the decision shall be taken in consultation with the respective school/institution management, based on their assessment of the situation. The Department of School Education and Literacy has issued detailed SOP/guidelines regarding health and safety precautions for reopening of schools after issue of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) guidelines for unlock-5, on 5th October, 2020. These guidelines have been revised vide letter 17th December, 2021. These guidelines can be accessed at following links respectively.

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SOP_Guidelines_for_reopening_schools_0.pdf

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Modifications_SoP.pdf

