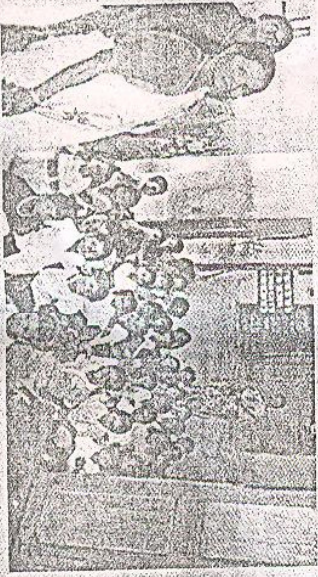


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Soon, a school within 5 km of every home

After success of elementary education scheme, govt plans secondary school programme to address needs



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New Delhi, July 15

WITH THE Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan showing good results by bringing in lakhs of children to schools and strengthening elementary education, the government is now going to launch a programme to carry forward the momentum into secondary grades.

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RSMMA), as it would be called, is aimed at expanding and improving the standards of secondary education — classes VIII to X. The RSMMA would also take secondary education to every corner of the country by ensuring a secondary school (up to class X) within a radius of 5 km for every

neighbourhood.

With the successful implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a large number of students are passing out from upper primary classes creating a huge demand for secondary education," the HRD Ministry said.

The Expenditure Finance Committee of the Finance Ministry has approved an outlay of Rs 20,120 crore for the scheme for the 11th plan period and the HRD Ministry is preparing to take the scheme for Cabinet approval. "We would launch the scheme in the present academic session, once the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approves the scheme," an official told HT. In the 11th plan period — of which four years are remaining

now — the costs of the programme would be shared between the Centre and the states on a 75:25 ratio. After that (in 12th plan period) it will be 50:50. For the Northeastern states the ratio would be 90:10.

"For 2008-09, which will be the first year, the Central allocation would be Rs 2,185 crore. The allocations would be gradually increasing through the next three years," an official said.

Targets under the programme include strengthening of 44,000 existing secondary schools, upgradation of 11,000 Upper Primary Schools to secondary level, 1.32 lakh classrooms would be constructed that would help in the expansion of the secondary schools. The programme would also concen-

trate on problem of teacher deficiency as RSMMA would recruit 2.5 lakh teachers in the plan period. Under RSMMA, in-service training of five days would also be provided to teachers.

Allocation-wise also, the scheme, along with other initiatives in the secondary education segment — like girls hostels, model schools and new Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas — would represent a quantum leap for the segment in 11th plan period. Allocation during 10th Plan was only Rs 4,325 crore.

According to the 2004-05 figures, only 24.3 million children of the 47.1 million in the age group of 14-16 years are in school. This puts the secondary enrollment rate at 51.65 per cent.

CLASSROOM CALLING

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan will be launched in this academic session. Central outlay of Rs 20,120 cr has been approved.

Scheme to have Centre-state share on 75:25 ratio

44,000 existing secondary schools to be strengthened, 1.32 lakh classrooms built and 2.5 lakh teachers recruited