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Need to focus on education of urban children, says study

Staff Reporter

Call for intervention to bring them into the mainstream

Study conducted under the banner of SSA Recommendations made to improve quality of education

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: A study conducted by the Technical Support Group of the Ministry of Human Resource Development in some of the largest metropolitan cities in the country has revealed a need to focus on the educational requirements of schoolchildren living in urban areas.

The study, conducted in 2008-09 under the banner of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Lucknow, Bhopal, Bangalore, Chennai, Patna, Hyderabad, Delhi and Kolkata, calls for special intervention in bringing the children into the mainstream.

The SSA is a programme for achieving universal elementary education, supported by the

MHRD.

The programme aims to provide equitable education of satisfactory quality to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Though the research does not cover any cities from the State, it does mention the total number of urban deprived or out-of-school children in the State as 3,030, one of the lowest among a tally of 15 other states. Maharashtra tops the tally with 1,00,199 urban-deprived children.

It was found that a number of initiatives for elementary education do not reach schools in the urban areas. The study calls for a diversity of approaches to tackle the educational problems. Among them is the need to coordinate and converge interventions across departments and local bodies responsible for elementary education in the urban areas.

Major problems

Some of the major problems and issues identified during the research were unavailability of land for opening schools and for running the schools on rent and lack of basic amenities.

The study notes that making primary education accessible to children across the country has been one of the major challenges.

The quality of elementary education in the country has also been a cause of worry. In order to improve the quality of primary education, the SSA has recommended a series of steps.

These include improving the student-teacher ratio, providing training to teachers and providing textbooks and academic support to the children.

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Written by Administrator

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Efforts are under way in several cities for the enrolment of the urban-deprived children. For instance, Chennai is running bridge courses with the active involvement of non-governmental organisations for bringing into the mainstream out-of-school children coming under the Chennai municipal corporation.

It is estimated that the 10 aforementioned cities together have around 3.11 lakh out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14 years against a combined population of 76.31 lakh people.