

# Survey of Class 3 students to set baseline for literacy goals

## Mission calls for use of mother tongue in early education

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The Centre's NIPUN Bharat Mission has set a goal that by 2026-27, every Class 3 child should be able to read with understanding at the rate of at least 60 words per minute, be able to read and write numbers up to 9,999 and solve simple multiplication problems.

For this purpose, ₹2,688 crore has been set aside under the existing Samagra Shiksha scheme for 2021-22, said Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank at the launch of the mission on Monday.

A National Achievement Survey of Class 3 students to be conducted this November will set a baseline to track future progress. "Until grade 3, children are expected to 'learn to read' and acquire basic skills. After grade 3 children are expected to be able to 'read to learn'. If this does not happen, the learning gap continues to widen from that point, as the texts in the language textbooks and mathematical concepts become more complex and abstract in later grades," said the NIPUN Bharat guidelines. "Thus, grade 3 is the inflection point and this is where children who have not made it, get left behind."

Apart from reading with



**Solid foundation:** The NIPUN Bharat Mission aims to improve competency in basic reading and math skills. ■ FILE PHOTO

comprehension, a child of 8 or 9 years should be able to write grammatically correct sentences, and converse with clarity using suitable vocabulary in the home or school languages. Together with simple number problems and the ability to identify shapes, time and date, fractions, and measurements in real-life situations, these goals are collectively being called the **foundational literacy and numeracy skills every child should possess.**

### Stage-wise targets

Similar stage-wise targets are being set in a continuum from the pre-primary or balvatika classes. **The NIPUN Bharat strategy includes changes in curriculum and teaching methods to include more activity, art and storytelling, creation of print-rich**

**materials and resources, teacher training, and stress-free assessment methods** in order to reach these goals.

NIPUN Bharat also emphasises the importance of using a child's mother tongue in teaching, a principle of the National Education Policy 2020, which received some criticism. "The mother tongue of the child must be the language of communication [if not the medium of instruction] with the child in school in the formative years, so that the child does not suffer any confusion in understanding the transactions and is able to grow with free expression," said the guidelines.

It noted that most children, given sufficient instruction, can learn to read in their own home language within 4-6 months if there is oral comprehension.