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No.EDN-HE(21)F(2)29/2021-V
Directorate of Higher Education,
Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-1
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Dated Shimla-1 the 2nd March, 2021



To

1. All the Deputy Directors of Higher Education,
Himachal Pradesh
2. All the Principals/ Headmasters,
Government Sen. Sec./ High Schools in,
Himachal Pradesh

Subject:- School Bag Policy, 2020.

In pursuance to Government of Himachal Pradesh letter No.EDN-B-GA(17)-2/2019-II dated 11-02-2021, received from the Secretary (Education) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh, enclosing therewith copy of letter F.No.1-4/2018-IS-3 dated 24th November, 2020 alongwith "School Bag Policy,2020" formulated and finalized by the Expert Committee and released by the NCERT, New Delhi. The relevant suggestions / highlights of the "School Bag Policy" are as under:-

- I. School Bags should be 10 percent of the body weight of the Students. For making the school bags lighter in weight following measures have been suggested:-
 1. Sharing of textbooks between two Students.
 2. Semester wise textbooks/ books in volumes.
 3. Provision of safe drinking water in Schools, so that Students need not carry water bottles from homes.
 4. Provision of lockers for Students in Schools.
 5. Alternate homework in different subjects.
 6. Deduction in weight of textbooks.
 7. Mentioning of weight of books by publishers.
 8. Keeping textbooks in Schools.
 9. Use of Tabs/ Smart classes.
 10. Notebooks with pages as per need.
 11. Block periods for a single subject in a day.
 12. Provision of breakfast and mid day meal in School.
 13. Rationalization of home work. 10-12 hours in a week for High and Senior Secondary Classes.
 14. Systematic use of files with loose sheets.
 15. Teachers should engage Students in activity based teaching learning process wherein Students can go beyond textbooks.
 16. Use of digital mode of communications instead of using School diaries for the same.
 17. School Bags should be made up of light material with two adjustable shoulders straps.
 18. Framing of school time table in such a way to make the load of School Bag light.
 19. Health, Physical Education, Sports and other co-curricular activities need to be given adequate space in the time table.

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- II. Bag Free Day will be encouraged throughout the year for various types of enrichment activities involving arts, quizzes, sports, cultural programmes and vocational crafts. For vocational crafts holidays and vacations can also be utilized. Under vocational crafts, fine arts, stitching, weaving, embroidery, carpentry, masonry, tile work, painting, gardening, pottery, wood polishing, traditional artistic work, beauticians, plumbing, bamboo work may be offered in Schools in collaboration with local vocational experts.

In view of above mentioned, you are directed to take appropriate action in the matter accordingly and these suggestions may be adopted during the Academic Session 2021-2022, in true letter and spirit. The "School Bag Policy, 2020" can be viewed and downloaded from the Departmental website i.e. educationhp.gov.in.



(Dr. Amarjeet K. Sharma),
Director of Higher Education,
Himachal Pradesh

Endst. No. Even Dated Shimla-1 the 2nd March, 2021
Copy for information and necessary action is forwarded to:-

1. The Secretary (Education) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla-2, w.r.t. No.EDN-B-GA(17)-2/2019-II dated 11-02-2021.
2. The Secretary, H.P. Board of School Education, Dharamshala, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, Pin-176213.
3. The Principal, State Council for Education Research and Training, Solan at Rabon, District Solan, Himachal Pradesh.
4. The Technical Officer, IT Cell, with the direction to upload this letter on the Departmental website alongwith School Bag Policy, 2020.
5. Master file.

श्रीमान निदेशालय उच्चतर शिक्षा

06 MAR 2021



Director of Higher Education,
Himachal Pradesh

F.No. 1-4/2018-IS-3
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education & Literacy
IS-3 Section

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated: 24th November, 2020

To,
The Education Secretaries of All the States and UTs,

Subject: School Bag Policy, 2020.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the judgment of Madras High Court dated 19.05.2018 in connection with WP No. 25680 of 2017 titled "M. Purushothanan Vs. Union of India" wherein Union of India inter-alia was directed to frame a policy on children school bag as in the lines of "Children School Bags (Limitation on Weight) Bill, 2006".

2. The School Bag Policy, 2020 as formulated by Expert Committee comprising of members from National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has been finalized by the Expert Committee and released by NCERT. The policy is being enclosed herewith for compliance.

3. It is brought to the notice that a new and comprehensive National Curricular Framework based on various recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 is also underway. Subsequent to the implementation of new NCF, the School Bag policy would be suitably modified/revised.

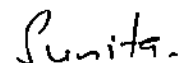
4. As you are aware that NEP, 2020 has been rolled out and it also highlights the need of initiatives such as bagless day, vocational courses and vocational crafts for holistic development of children. As per para 3.15 of school bag policy and para 4.26 of NEP, 2020, every student will take a fun course, during Grades 6-8, that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc., as decided by States and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs. All students will participate in a 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 where they intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects may be made available to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available. Bagless days will be encouraged throughout the year for various types of enrichment activities involving arts, quizzes, sports, and vocational crafts.

5. It is requested to kindly adopt relevant suggestions of the School Bag Policy and NEP, 2020 and ensure their implementation in your jurisdiction. The compliance report in this regard may be shared with this Department.

6. This issues with the approval of Secretary (SE&L).

Encl: As above.

Yours faithfully,



(Sunita Sharma)

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tel. No. 011-23384251



Department of School Education and Literacy
Ministry of Education, Government of India

POLICY ON SCHOOL BAG

2020





Department of School Education and Literacy
Ministry of Education, Government of India

POLICY ON SCHOOL BAG

2020

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एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	American Chiropractic Association
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CWSN	Children with Special Needs
DCS	Department of Curriculum Studies
DIET	District Institute for Education and Training
KVS	Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan
KVs	Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCFSE	National Curriculum Framework for School Education
NEP	National Education Policy
NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NVS	Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti
PTM	Parent Teachers Meeting
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SIEMAT	State Institute of Educational Management and Training
UT	Union Territory
WP	Writ Petition

POLICY ON SCHOOL BAG

1. INTRODUCTION

School education, as a process, has been contributing to the holistic development of children. It also plays a crucial role in providing citizenship education to children in the country. It is an important aspect of an individual's life too. It not only enlightens one, but also opens up many avenues for one's livelihood. This process formally takes place within the boundaries of a school with a designed curriculum including textbooks. It is facilitated by school heads, teachers and other staff of the school within the school duration of 4-8 hours daily, from morning till afternoon or evening, for the whole year. Variations in school timings maybe observed in states or UTs because of geographical reasons.

If one tries to visualise the schooling process in the present time, one sees an image of a child with a bag on the shoulder. The very posture and the expression on the face of the child give an impression that the bag is very heavy for the child. Eminent writer R.K Narayan had drawn the country's attention to this daily sight by making a moving speech in the Rajya Sabha (Yash Pal Committee report, MHRD, 1993).

This concern was also discussed during the framing of the National Curriculum Framework for School

Education (NCFSE) 2000 and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). NCF-2005 draws insight from the Report *Learning without Burden* (Yash Pal Committee report, MHRD, 1993), which indicates the school bag as a source of physical discomfort besides load of non-comprehension i.e., curriculum load.

The NCF-2005 also attempted to reduce the curriculum load suggesting a principle of connecting a child's day-to-day experiences with the school knowledge. When the school will provide children with learning opportunities linking knowledge with their own experiences, this will help children to engage with familiar and known things. This will lead them to understand unfamiliar concepts and unknown phenomenon with interest and motivation. It further recommends flexibility in the school time-table—only three subjects for Classes I-II, four subjects for Classes III-V, six subjects for Classes VI-X. At the pre-primary stage, no textbook is recommended.

The school education system needs to have faith in the child's agency. Children are natural learners. They learn more when they are stress free and are in a conducive learning environment. Learning under pressure makes them anxious and lose interest in learning. Their day-to-day life experiences, voices, questions, etc., need to be given adequate space in the classroom and new learning needs to be built upon that. This will make them understand the required concepts rather than rote memorising. School system needs to offer basic required subjects at every stage as per the policy direction. More subjects and textbooks at all the stages in general and at the primary stage in particular create not only stress of studying but also discomfort carrying those textbooks to school making the bag heavy. Once the school system

shifts from textbook dominated culture to learner-centric competence-based culture, the problem of heavy bags will automatically be addressed.

Various surveys and classroom transaction-process studies conducted from time to time have revealed that the schoolbag is heavy and textbook and teacher talk dominate in the classroom.

To address this problem, massive advocacy and orientation is required, at all the levels for educational administrators, school heads, teacher educators, teachers, parents and students.

Many states and UTs and other agencies have taken some initiatives to address issues related to heavy school bags, such as, creating semester system in schools (Tamil Nadu) and locker systems for keeping textbooks in school (a few Kendriya Vidyalayas), some CBSE schools, etc. The state of Telangana and Maharashtra had also circulated guidelines on school bags. Moreover, a Private Member Bill entitled Children's School Bag (Limitations on Weight) Bill 2006, was also in place for discussion.

Further, Honourable High Court of Jurisdiction at Madras in its judgment dated 29.05.2018 in *M. Purushothaman Vs. Union of India* (WP No. 25680 of 2018) has directed the Union of India to formulate a policy on children's school bag on the lines of *Children's School Bag (Limitation on Weight) Bill, 2006*.

In view of the above, MoE decided to constitute an Expert Group with the following composition vide Order F. N. 1-4/2018-IS-3 dated 5th October 2018 (Appendix H)—

1. Ranjana Arora, *Head*, Department of Curriculum Studies (DCS), NCERT, New Delhi (Convener)
2. S. Vijaya Kumar, *Joint Commissioner* (Academic), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)

3. A.N. Ramchandra, *Joint Commissioner* (Academic), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)
4. Joseph Emmanuel, *Director* (Academics) and *Chief Vigilance Officer*, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
5. M. Deepika, *Professor*, Department of Curriculum and Textbook Development, SCERT, Government of Telangana
6. Dinkar Temkar, *Joint Director*, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra
7. Pramod Kumar T.K., *Joint Secretary* (Academic), CBSE, New Delhi (Special Invitee)

The Expert Group had been given the mandate to formulate a draft policy on children's school bag in pursuance of the direction of the Honourable High Court of Madras.

WORKING METHOD

The Expert Group members met four times from October to December 2018 to pool their experiences as administrators and academicians in their organisations and also, as parents on the problem of heavy school bags. They also shared guidelines developed by their organisations and states on the reduction of heavy school bags to formulate a strategy for developing the draft policy. After due consideration, the following working method was adopted by the Group.

Discussion on Guidelines, Researches and other Documents to Understand and Address the Problem of School Bag

The Group has gone through the following guidelines, documents and researches and discussed relevant points related to the weight of school bags—

- (a) *Learning without Burden*, Report of the Yash Pal Committee, (MHRD, 1993) *National Curriculum Framework-2005*
- (b) *The Children's School Bag (Limitation on Weight) Bill*, 2006
- (c) CBSE Circular No.07.2006 on Subject—*Reducing the Bag Load on Children*
- (d) *Reduction of weight of school bag—need for strict compliance*, guidelines issued by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan on 29.12.2009
- (e) *Measures to be taken to reduce the burden of school bag (Daptar) of the Children*, guidelines by the government of Maharashtra, School Education and Sports Department, 21 July 2015
- (f) *Guidelines issued by the Government of Telangana* (18.7.2017)
- (g) Decision in W.M.P. No. 9267 of 2018. [*M. Purushothaman, Chennai vs. Secretary, Government of India*, Department of School Education and Literacy Human Resources Development Ministry New Delhi and Others, W.M.P. No. 9267 of 2018 & W.P. No. 25680 of 2017, decided on, 29 May 2018.]
- (h) National Education Policy, 2020

Based on this discussion and survey of related literature, meaning of school bag and issues related to weight of school bag are given below.

A. Meaning of School Bag

As per Collins English Dictionary, “A school bag is a bag that children use to carry books and other things to and from school”.

Cambridge English Dictionary defines school bag as “A bag that is used for carrying books, etc., for school, usually with a long strap and carried over the shoulder, or carried on the back like a backpack.”

B. Weight of the School Bag

The issue of bad posture and backache in children and adolescents has become a current issue in India and abroad. It is frequently addressed in scientific publications. Excerpts from a few are mentioned below—

“The school bag is a common cause of backache in school-going children. A heavy bag may cause a child to compensate by leaning his body forward and this can strain muscles in his neck, shoulders and back. The child may also find it difficult to put the bag on and take it off, or he falls frequently in school while carrying his schoolbag” (R. Avantika, et al, 2013) (link- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258127850_Postural_Effect_of_Back_Packs_on_School_Children_Its_Consequences_on_Their_Body_Posture.)

Kyphotic and balanced body postures dominate during the period of seven to eight years of age. However, when the child begins to attend school, their time spent in a sitting position is extended, which can result in disorders of posture genesis. Hence, this period is called “the first critical period of posture genesis” (Katarzyna Walicka-Cupry, et.al, 2015)

Various international organisations have recommended the weight of school bag in relation to the body weight from time to time. For example, in 2009, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) recommended not carrying a backpack heavier than 15 per cent (or between 10% and 20%) of the student’s body weight. Further in 2012, this was changed to 10 per cent of their body weight. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) recommended that backpack weight should not exceed 5–10 per cent of the child’s bodyweight. (link-<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/bmri/2015/817913/>)

Many authors have concluded that the weight of a school bag should not exceed 10 per cent of the child's body weight, based on the fact that it can affect their spinal posture, foot shape, and walk. However, there is still no clear information about the impact that a school bag has on the formation of spinal curvature in the sagittal plane among school-going children.

In India also, the state of Maharashtra had issued detailed guidelines with regard to reducing the weight of school bag in the year 2015 including class-wise average weight of students and the recommended weight of school bag around 10 per cent of the child's weight.

Now, it is universally acknowledged that the weight of the school bag to be carried by children or students should be related primarily to the individual's body weight. However, it is also important to look at other factors contributing to this load, such as, capacity to carry weight, mental or physical disorder, disability, disease, distance for which the bag is continuously to be carried, etc., which cannot easily be quantified.

Even a moderately heavy bag may present problems during the student's journey to school. The layout of the school premises presents additional difficulties once the student is at school, e.g., stairs, distances within the school, etc.

Members of the committee also interacted personally with parents, teachers, medical practitioners, students and school administrator on the issue of school bag.

Survey on School Bag

In Indian context, although some studies have been conducted, the Group did not come across any comprehensive survey which sees the problem of school bag holistically from multiple perspectives of schools, parents and students.

Therefore, the group decided to conduct a brief survey of schools (through visits and correspondence with the

schools using survey tools) and get data for the analysis of issues regarding school bag in the school system.

2.3.1 Design of the Survey

- (a) Tools—The Expert Group had developed a set of questionnaires for—
 - (i) School Head
 - (ii) Parents
 - (iii) Students

A Google form has also been developed based on these questionnaires for the collection of data using on-line mode.

- (b) Sample—352 schools, 2992 parents and 3624 students were selected as sample for this study. Due to the paucity of time, purposive sampling was done. The sample for the survey contains schools affiliated to CBSE, schools recognised by the states of Telangana and Maharashtra. However, residential school systems are excluded in this survey in view of the presence of children inside the campus.
- (c) Questionnaires were sent to members of the committee for data collection.
- (d) School heads were expected to collect data not only from their staff but also from parents and students. Measuring the student's weight, that of the school bag and each item of the school bag was made an integral part of the tool prepared for the school head.
- (e) The term 'weight' was meant to include the school bag and its contents plus all the items carried outside the bag on the date of the survey.
- (f) The ratio of the 'load' to body weight was calculated in percentage form in each individual case based on the data supplied by the school.

- (g) A summary of the findings is given at Appendices B, C and D. These form the more factual and important aspects of this report.

2.3.2 Collection and Analysis of Data

Three hundred and fifty two schools including Kendriya Vidyalayas and state government schools responded to the questionnaire. 3624 students and 2992 parents have also responded back on the questionnaire.

Table 1: Number of Schools under Different Managements

Schools	Number of Responses
Telangana (Government, Zila Parishad and Private schools)	40
CBSE (Private schools)	21
KVS (Central Govt.)	127
Maharashtra (State Government)	152
Others	12
Total	352

2.3.3 Major Findings of the Survey

I. Are the school bags really heavy?

- (i) In the survey, 48.8 per cent school heads said that they weigh the school bag of their children. Out of this, 19 per cent of school heads found from the weight of school bag for primary classes (I-V) that the bags are heavy. It is generally found varying from 2 to 3.5 Kg, but two school heads said that it is varying from 3 to 5 Kg. This means, children are carrying bags of weight 2 to 3 Kg more than the permissible weight i.e., 10 per cent of the body weight which is universally accepted. From Class VI, weight of the school bag

further increases (from 3 to 6 Kg), which exceeds the internationally* accepted limit of 10 per cent of body weight. Items found contributing to excessive load were—

1. Textbooks- 500 gms to 3.5 Kg
2. Notebooks– 200 gms to 2.5 Kg
3. Lunch box 200 gms to 1 kg
4. Water bottle 200 gms to 1 Kg

The weight of the empty bag was also found to be varying from 150 gms to 1 Kg.

Reference books were also found to contribute to the weight of the school bag from Classes IX onwards.

- (ii) Maximum School Heads (77.2%) say that besides textbooks, the students usually carry lunch pack, followed by water or drinks (63.5%), thick notebooks (38.5%), science or math kit (16%). According to the respondents, students are less likely to carry toys (0.6%), sports kit (3.2%), full or nearly full files (2.6%), non-school/non-library books and other necessary items (11.2%).
- (iii) Majority of schools reported that students, though drink potable water at school, yet carry their water bottles with them.
- (iv) Students revealed that they see school bag as the only means for them to carry their notebooks, textbooks and other necessary items to school. Majority of students want to carry school bag but with less weight.

* The current guideline in Europe and Australia is that children can carry a school bag that weighs up to 10 per cent of their own body weight. In the United States, the American Occupational Therapy Association recommends 10 per cent body weight as the upper limit, the American Physical Therapy Association recommends 10–15 per cent body weight and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 10–20 per cent body-weight. (Source- Weblink <https://content.iospress.com/articles/work/wor2260#ref014>)

- (v) 38.9 per cent of the school heads think that handling school bags is a problem for the students. Many of them have been receiving complaints regarding heavy school bag from parents (77.7%), students (74.4%) and other stakeholders. Majority of schools (71.2%) have already taken action, such as, staff meeting, interacting with parents (65.8%), etc. to address this issue. Out of 2992 parents about 77.7 per cent said that handling of heavy school bag is a serious problem which they often discuss with their child and family and 90.8 per cent parents often check their children's bag.

Following are a few actions and best practices undertaken by some schools to address the problem of heavy school bag —

- Students are regularly being advised by the teachers and schools to bring lighter school bags and for the same, announcements are being made during the morning assembly. Counselling sessions for students are also being held.
- Teachers are instructed to check the school bags of the students regularly.
- Some schools have also brought changes in the school time table to address the issue (details of these changes were not shared by them).
- Schools are also facilitating sharing of one textbook in a subject with the peer sitting nearby. This helps children to carry lighter bags.
- The textbooks are also being divided into two parts, one for each term.
- Some schools have also asked students to use tabs instead of textbooks.
- Parents are also being continuously informed and are also being asked to monitor the weight

of the school bag. Some schools are giving scope to children to complete their work in school only, after school hours.

- Awareness is generated among the students to reduce the burden on their shoulders by telling them the side effects of the same. Schools are also interacting with parents on the issue of heavy bag and are advising them to keep checking their ward's school bag so that the weight of unnecessary items may be avoided.
 - The schools are also arranging periodic checking of school bags in the morning assembly or are organising surprise checking by the teachers or supervisors.
 - Efforts are being made to provide good quality drinking water in the school premises.
- (vi) Some good practices towards reduction of weight of school bag as reported by the schools—
1. Notebooks and Class work copies are being kept in schools
 2. Use of weighing machine to check the weights of school bags in the school
 3. Practice of having one notebook for all the subjects
 4. No reference book is allowed to be carried to the school
 5. Time table is designed in such a way that, each alternate day, children are allowed to not carry the school bags
 6. Interaction with parents on the issue of heavy school bag in Parent-Teacher Meetings
- (vii) Files (from Classes VI onwards)—71 per cent students in the survey were of the opinion that daily files will be useful instead of notebooks for reducing the weight of school bags.

II. Homework

It is reported in the findings from students that the hours of homework varies class wise. In Classes I-II, the homework hours vary from 0 to 2 hours on a daily basis.

Whereas, for Classes III onwards, it varies from 2 to 5 hrs daily. However, the responses received from the schools revealed that 92 per cent schools have homework policy, and either they do not give home work in Classes I and II or give homework of very less duration, say, 30 minutes.

III. Subjects being taught at the Elementary Stage

It was found in the survey that though the National Curriculum Framework-2005 recommends only two subjects – Language and Mathematics for Classes I and II, yet many schools offer other subjects, such as, Social Sciences, Science, Computer Science, etc., for these classes. For Classes III-V, beyond NCF-2005 recommendations of Language, Mathematics and Environmental Studies, there is a range of subjects, which is offered by the schools. Offering of these subjects lead to additional books in these subject areas which adds weight to the child's school bag.

IV. Multiple Textbooks at the Secondary and Higher Secondary Stages

Survey revealed that schools prescribe more than one textbook for the same subject in secondary and higher secondary classes. This not only creates burden on parents, but also adds to the load of school bag, as many a times, students carry all the books for the same subject without knowing which book will be used in the class on which day.

Detailed findings of the survey are given at Annexures — B, C and D.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REDUCTION OF WEIGHT OF SCHOOL BAG

It is observed that the school curriculum which includes subjects offered at different stages, homework, etc., has strong correlation with the weight of school bag. For example, more number of subjects offered in schools imply more textbooks need to be carried, and homework on daily basis implies additional weight of homework note book in the bag.

Therefore, based on the survey data and also intense discussions, the Expert Group has made following recommendations for the reduction of weight of school bag including recommendations on homework and number of subjects offered.

- 3.1. Based on research studies conducted in this area, recommendations of international agencies about the standard weight of school bag, guidelines issued by the state of Maharashtra and also the survey conducted by the Committee, it is recommended to follow universally accepted ratio of weight for school bag as 10 per cent of the body weight of the student across Classes I to X.
- 3.2. Weight of school bag needs to be monitored and checked on a regular basis in the school. For this, every school needs to keep a digital weighing machine in the school premises.
- 3.3. School bag needs to be light-weight with proper compartments and contain two padded and adjustable straps that can be squarely fit on both the shoulders. Wheeled carriers should not be allowed as it may hurt children while climbing stairs.
- 3.4. Schools need to ensure that the facilities which are mandated for schools to provide, such as,

mid-day meals, etc., are adequate and of good quality so that children are not carrying items, such as, lunch box.

- 3.5. It shall be the duty and responsibility of school management to provide good quality potable water in sufficient quantity accessible to all the students in the school to avoid carrying water bottle in school bag or reduce its size.
- 3.6. The school or class time table needs to be made flexible providing adequate space for sports and physical education, reading of books available in school other than textbooks, arts and crafts, etc.
- 3.7. For selecting a textbook for children, the criterion of weight should be taken into consideration. Weight of each textbook may be printed on the textbook by the publishers, along with the Grams per Square Meter (GSM).
- 3.8. Children with Special Needs (CWSN) can be provided double set of textbooks, through book banks in schools.
- 3.9. Lockers in classes may be installed for students with disabilities for storing and retrieving books and other items.
- 3.10. School Bag Awareness Programme needs to be held in the beginning of every academic session, wherein parents and students would get orientation on this issue.
- 3.11. As per the NCF-2005, school shall offer two Languages and Mathematics in Classes I and II and two Languages, Mathematics and Environmental Studies in Classes III, IV and V. School shall offer three Languages, Mathematics, Science and Social Science in Classes VI to VIII. Subjects, such as, Computer Studies, Moral Education, and General Knowledge, life skills,

etc., need to be infused across subject areas and other activities in the school without additional textbooks. Health and Physical Education, work experience and Sports and Arts Education are the areas which help in the all-round development of children. These need to be given adequate space in the time table. Children should not be made to carry any textbook for these areas.

3.12. Based on recommendation of NCF-2005 on homework, the Group recommends that—

A. Total study time that is expected from students in both face-to-face and self- study or homework needs to be accounted for while planning the syllabus or course of study for students, especially as they are going to higher grade.

B. Total Homework time

Primary: No homework up to Class II and a maximum of two hours a week from Classes III-V.

Middle School (from Classes VI-VIII): A maximum of one hour a day (about five to six hours a week).

Secondary and Higher Secondary: A maximum of two hours a day (about 10 to 12 hours a week). Teachers need to work together to plan and rationalise the amount of homework that they give. (The NCF 2005 has been disseminated to all the States/UTs and it has also been placed on the NCERT website www.ncert.nic.in.)

3.13. The issues related to heavy school bag need to be included in the pre-service and in-service teacher education curriculum.

- 3.14 As per the National Education Policy, 2020 (para-4.33), concerted efforts, through suitable changes in curriculum and pedagogy, will be made by NCERT, SCERTs, schools, and educators to significantly reduce the weight of school bags and textbooks. The policy further recommends a practice-based curriculum for Grades 6-8 will be appropriately designed by NCERT while framing the NCFSE 2020-21.

Based on the above, the Committee recommends designing of textbooks with less information and more space to experiential learning.

- 3.15 As per the NEP, 2020 (para-4.26), every student will take a fun course, during Grades 6-8, that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc., as decided by States and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs. All students will participate in a 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 where they intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects may be made available to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available. Bagless days will be encouraged throughout the year for various types of enrichment activities involving arts, quizzes, sports, and vocational crafts. Children will be given periodic exposure to activities outside school through visits to places/monuments of historical, cultural and tourist importance, meeting local artists and craftsmen and visits higher educational institutions in their village/Tehsil/District/State.

Based on the above, the Committee recommends development of guidelines by the NCERT to conduct bagless days in schools using different timetable, experiential pedagogies, team-teaching approach (teacher and local artisan together supporting children to learn vocational craft) and assessment as learning for the holistic development of students. These guidelines will further be contextualised by the states/UTs as per their needs.

4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

4.1.1 Reduction of School Bag

A. For schools (Principals and Teachers)

i. Body weight and weight of school bag

The suggestive table for class-wise range for ratio for school bag as 10 per cent of the body weight is given below.

Table 2: Class wise range of average body weight of children

S.No.	Class	Average Body Weight Range (in Kg)	Bag Weight Range (Recommended)
1.	Pre-primary	10-16	No bag
2.	Class I	16-22	1.6-2.2
3.	Class II	16-22	1.6-2.2
4.	Class III	17-25	1-7-2.5
5.	Class IV	17-25	1-7-2.5
6.	Class V	17-25	1-7-2.5
7.	Class VI	20-30	2-3
8.	Class VII	20-30	2-3
9.	Class VIII	25-40	2.5-4
10.	Class IX	25-45	2.5-4.5
11.	Class X	25-45	2.5-4.5

12.	Class XI	35-50	3.5 -5
13.	Class XII	35-50	3.5 -5

Since this suggestion is based on pattern seen under various studies, it is suggested that every school need to take initiative to develop a table of this kind discussing with school staff, parents, physicians from nearby area, counselor, and psychologists and can come out with a suggestive table keeping in view weight, gender and disabilities of children (if any). Every school should display this chart prominently on the notice board of the school and in each classroom.

ii. Regular Checking of Weight of School Bag in the School

Since schooling is a continuous process and every year new children are joining school, the checking of weight of school bag needs to be made a regular practice in school by keeping a weighing machine functional in the school premises. From Classes I to V, teachers must take the responsibility of checking the weight of school bag of children randomly every three months on a day selected for the whole class. Information about the heavy bag needs to be communicated to the parents of the child and the bag needs to be monitored for a week or two for ensuring that the child starts carrying a lighter bag. This needs to be done in a very polite way and in the form of counseling rather than in the form of hard instructions. From Class IV onward teachers need to use this activity for clarifying the relative concepts in Mathematics and age-body weight relation in Science, etc. This activity may be used as a pedagogic intervention in the classroom for understanding concepts in Environmental Studies, Science, Mathematics, Languages and Social Sciences.

iii. Time Table

- (a) The class time table should indicate which book will be used on which day. The time

table needs to be flexible including block periods (two continuous periods for the same subject). Block period (two periods for a subject together) approach to be used from Classes I-VIII wherein teaching of less subjects for more duration need to be organised per day. For primary classes, two subjects per day approach will help in substantial reduction of the weight of school bag (two sample time tables of Kendriya Vidyalayas are given in Annexure-E).

- (b) In the beginning of the academic session, once the subject time table for a class is finalised, the Head of School needs to ensure a fair distribution of textbook weight per day for students of Classes I to XII.
- (c) When more than one textbook for the same subject are prescribed, students should know which of the textbooks is to be used on any particular day. This information should form part of the official school time table and is to be followed by both students and teachers.

iv. Note Books

- (a) Single notebook need to be used for Classes I and II for classwork only.
- (b) Two note books for classwork and homework for Classes III-V. At a time only one notebook shall be allowed in a child's bag, the second one will be kept in school.
- (c) For Classes VI-VIII, one file with loose paper need to be used for classwork and homework. Systematic use of files with loose sheets need to be promoted from Class VI onwards, Students need to be taught on how to use 'filing' in an efficient and intelligent way so that loose sheets do not become lost sheets.

- (d) Files and thin exercise-books should be preferred to thick ones. From primary stage, students should be given systematic training in proper use of school files and homework filing systems.

v. Sharing of Textbooks

Sharing of textbooks among peers may be promoted so that children sitting together need not carry all the textbooks every day.

vi. Going Beyond Textbooks

There are lessons when the textbook is not used at all. With adequate planning, students should be given an advance notice by the subject teacher so that they can leave textbooks at home when these are not going to be used. Teachers should engage students in activity based teaching-learning process wherein students can go beyond textbooks. Teachers need to be guided by the Heads of School to reduce the use of text books by students during class hours. Judicious use of handouts especially when the main textbook has a reference role is helpful. For example, in case of Science and Mathematics, teachers can prepare classroom for conducting activities so that students need not bring textbooks for these subject areas.

vii. School Diary

School Diary or Almanac also adds to the weight of school bag. This needs to be avoided or made thinner as it remains mostly empty. If teacher wants to inform parents about the child, they may either use mobile, email or back pages of the child's notebook or any digital platform whatever is feasible.

B. Involving Parents on the Issue of School Bag

- (i) Awareness building programmes for parents and students during the Parent Teacher Meetings (PTM) and also utilising the media need to be arranged from time to time.

- (ii) In the Parent Teacher Meetings, it needs to be discussed and advocated that the bag used for children should be made of a light material, and should NOT have wheels, as while lifting this up the stairs, the wheels may hurt the children. Its interior need to be compartmentalised to prevent shifting of the contents from side to side as this creates discomfort to the child. It needs to have two shoulder straps, which should be used so that the bag is carried squarely on the back. The shoulder straps need to be padded, to prevent any 'digging' effect at the shoulder. The length of the straps should be adjustable to suit the individual needs of different physiques.

C. For Department and Directorate of School Education in States and UTs

The following table clearly shows the total weight of recommended textbooks developed by the NCERT per class for all the major subjects.

Table 3: Weight of Textbooks Developed by the NCERT (class wise)

S. No.	Class	No. of NCERT Textbooks	Total Weight (in gms.)	No. of Subjects (Version-English or Hindi)
1.	Pre-primary	No text book is recommended		
2.	Class I	3	1078	3
3.	Class II	3	1080	3
4.	Class III	4	1572	4
5.	Class IV	4	1804	4
6.	Class V	4	1916	4
7.	Class VI	10	3080	6
8.	Class VII	10	3508	6
9.	Class VIII	11	3640	6

10.	Class IX	15	4400	6
11.	Class X	13	4182	6

Note: for Classes XI and XII the School/Management may workout the weight as per subjects offered under different streams in the school.

It is clear from the table that in primary classes, total weight of all the textbooks does not exceed 2 Kg. If all the subjects are not being taught on a day or if sharing of books are allowed among peers, then this weight will be reduced to 1 Kg. This also applies for upper primary and secondary classes.

The Department of School Education at the State/ UT level needs to frame similar kind of table to be sent to schools under their jurisdiction with an instruction to formulate a table of weight of all the textbooks recommended to be used in the school so that everyone in the school to have clarity about the weight of each individual textbook, which will help in the selection of textbooks for each day.

D. Publishers (including NCERT)

Once it is established that heavy textbooks rank first in school bag weight, there is a need for textbook developer and publishers to look into this issue further, NCERT need to come out with Textbook Development Policy which clearly enumerate minimum and maximum range of pages and weight of the textbook for each class across subject areas also keeping in view the environmental concerns. Publishers need to also print weight of the each textbook (if feasible) on the inner cover page or on the back cover page of the textbook so that students and parents will be aware of the weight of the school bag being carried on day-to-day basis.

E. Educational Institutions at the State, District and Block level

1. NCERT and SCERTs need to develop awareness modules for the training of teachers, teacher

educators and other stakeholders on issues related to school bag, home work, etc. These modules may also be converted in to online modules.

2. NCERT/NIEPA/SCERTs/DIETs/SIEMAT/School Education Boards/CBSE/Private schools need to use these modules in every training programme being conducted for teachers, school heads and teacher educator to sensitise them on the issue of lighter school bag and on homework.
3. These issues also need to get space in the curriculum of pre-service teacher education by the NCERT/NCTE/SCERTs/DIETs.

4.1.2 Subjects at the Elementary Stage (Classes I-VIII)

A. For School Management (in case of Private Schools) and For Department of Education (in case of Government or Government-aided Schools)

Once it is established that heavy textbooks rank first in school bag weight the most effective approach would be the formulation of, and adherence to the NCF norms prescribed for subjects of study at different levels. For achieving this ideal, school management and administration need to issue the advisory for all the schools including the following—

- (iv) As per the NCF-2005, schools shall offer two Languages and Mathematics in Classes I and II and two Languages, Mathematics and Environmental Studies in Classes III, IV and V.
- (v) School shall offer three Languages, Mathematics, Science and Social Science in Classes VI to VIII.
- (vi) Subjects, such as, Computer Studies, Moral Education, and General Knowledge need to be infused across subject areas and other activities in the school without additional textbooks.

- (vii) Health, Physical Education and Sports and Arts Education are the areas which help in the all-round development of children. These need to be given adequate space in the time table. Children should not be allowed to carry any textbook for this area.

5. HOMEWORK

A. For School Management (in case of Private Schools) and For Department of Education (in case of Government/Government-aided Schools)

On the issue of Homework, school management/administration need to issue an advisory for all the schools focusing on the following points:

Total Study time

The time that is expected from students in both face-to-face and self study or homework needs to be accounted for while planning the syllabus or course of study especially as they are going to higher classes.

Total Homework time

Primary No homework up to Class II and a maximum of two hours a week from Classes III-V.

Middle School (from Classes VI-VIII)

A maximum of one hour a day (about five to six hours a week).

Secondary and Higher Secondary

A maximum of two hours a day (about 10 to 12 hours a week). Teachers need to work together to plan and rationalise the amount of homework that they give children. (NCF 2005).

B. For Schools (Principals and Teachers)

Homework is also an issue, which makes both students and parents stressed because as a general practice it

needs to be completed by night and reported in the school next morning. This practice snatches play time of child, parents' quality time with child, activities leading to socialisation with the family. Moreover, it is often observed, mechanical kinds of homework is being given to students. For example, copy answers from books, writing of an essay, writing of some project work taking help from the internet, etc.

Children should be given an opportunity for creative work at home in which they can take interest along with their family members. For example, creating a pattern of consumption of rice and sugar in the whole month, details of consumption of electricity in the last six months, recording an anecdote spoken by grandpa from his school days or days he worked as, farmer, etc. (Detailed guidelines for Implementation of creative homework is annexed at Appendix-F). Children need to be encouraged to read books at home. There is a need to discuss some of these books in the school. This will improve reading habits of children. Book clubs may be opened in the school so that children can get variety of books free of cost in the school itself.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Children are the future of the Nation. Their good health and stress free mind will contribute to nation building. Therefore, it needs to be made mandatory that every school irrespective of its management (Government, Government aided, unaided) ensures the implementation of School Bag Policy for the betterment of our children.



A.N. Ramchandra,
Member



S. Vijaya Kumar,
Member



Dinkar Temkar,
Member



Dr. Joseph Emmanuel,
Member



M. Deepika,
Member



Prof. Ranjana Arora,
Convener

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Web links

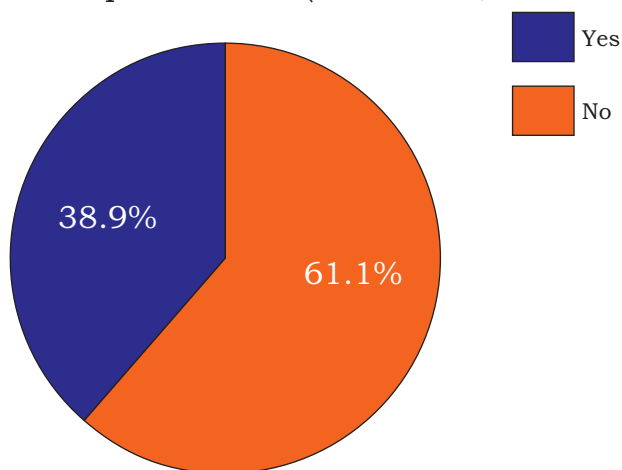
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Appendix B**Findings of the Analysis of Responses on School Bags from School Heads**

Total number of schools responded to the questionnaire= 352

1. Is handling of school bags considered a problem?

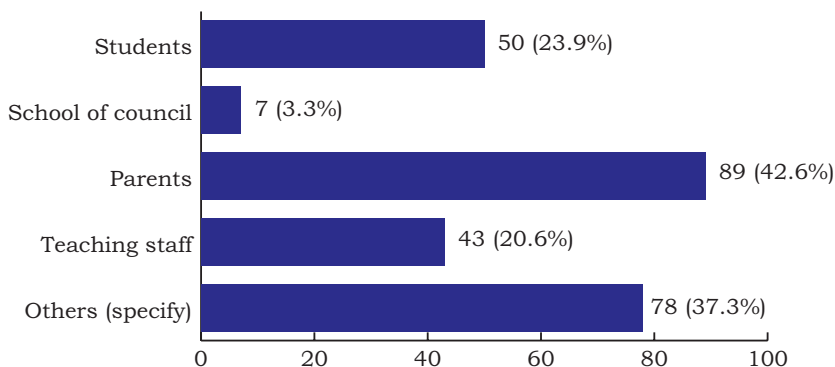
Number of responses: 342 (Yes-38.9%, No-61.1%)



As it can be seen in the above figure 38.9 per cent of the school heads think that handling school bag is a problem for the students.

2. Complaints received regarding the school bag from various stake holders

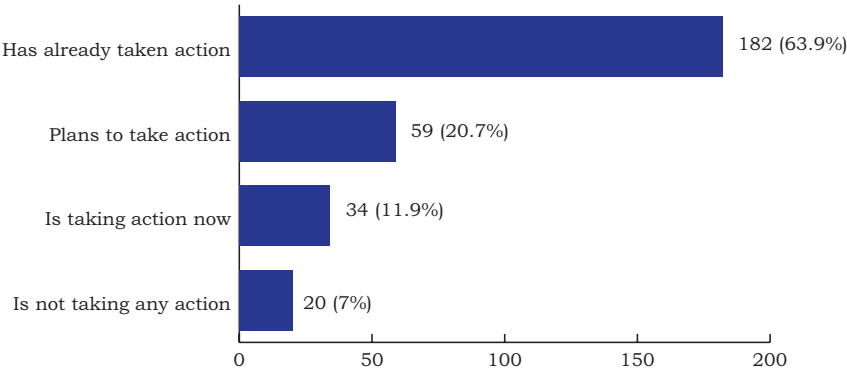
Number of responses: 209



According to the above Seen bar diagram we can conclude that 42.6 per cent (89) School Heads have received complaints from the parents regarding the weight of the school bags. Parents lead the trend and are the most concerned of all regarding the issue. They are followed by the students (23.9%) themselves. The school council can be seen as complaining the least (3.3%) after the teaching staff (20.6%). High responses can be seen in the category of others (37.3%) in which the specified responses are not received.

3. Actions on the part of School on the issue of school bag

Number of responses: 285



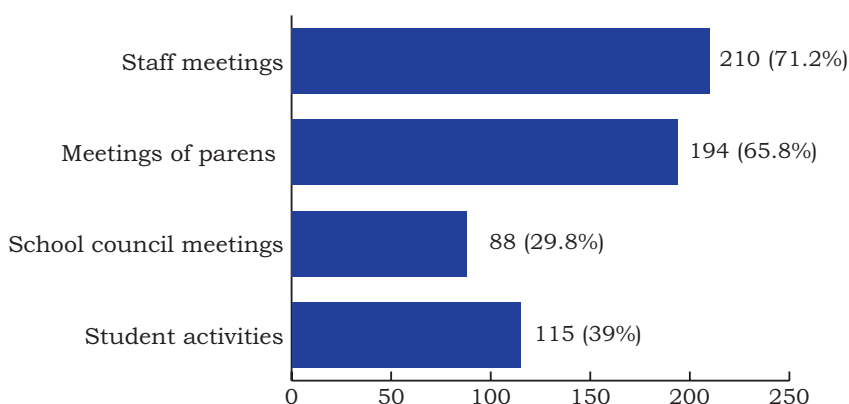
Out of the 285 School Heads who had responded to the questionnaire, 63.9 per cent (182) schools had already taken some action regarding the issue. Whereas, 20.7 per cent (59) schools are planning to do so and 11.9 per cent (34) are taking an action at this moment. However, among all these schools there are 7 per cent (20) schools which are not taking any action regarding the issue. Some schools have listed the actions they have taken for the same—

- Students are regularly being advised to bring lighter school bags and announcements are being during the morning assembly to advise students to bring lighter bags and counselling sessions for students are also being conducted.

- Teachers are instructed to check the school bags of the students regularly.
- Some schools have also brought changes in the school time table to address the same.
- Schools are also instructing students to use one textbook for each subject and also to share the books among two students.
- The textbooks are also being divided into two parts, one for each term.
- Some schools are also being progressive by asking the students to use tabs instead of textbooks.
- Parents are also being continuously informed and are also being asked to monitor the weight of the bag for the students.

4. Actions taken by the school authorities are in the following forms

Number of responses: 295



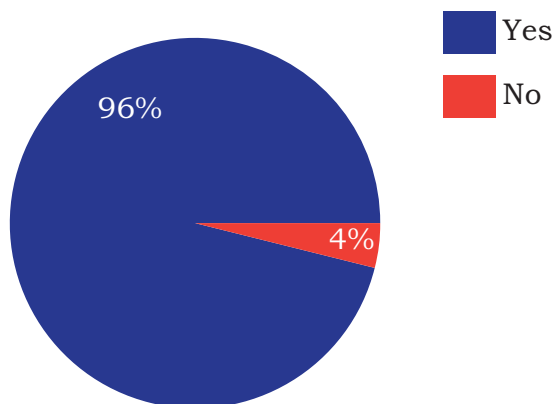
71.2 per cent (210) of the respondents took action by arranging staff meetings around the issue. 65.8 per cent (194) of the schools arranged a meeting for parents to address the issue. 39 per cent (115) schools arranged student activities to address the issue and worked directly with them and the least 29.8 per cent (88) schools conducted school council meeting for

the issue. Many of the schools are doing something extra to make sure that the issue is being addressed. Following are the points that are mentioned by the heads:

- Schools are giving scope to children to complete their work in school after school hours.
- Awareness is generated among the students to reduce the burden on their shoulders by telling them the side effects of the same.
- Schools are also including parents in the discussion and are advising them to keep checking the school bags to send only useful books.
- The schools are also arranging periodic checking of school bags in the morning assembly or are organising surprise checking by the teachers or supervisors.
- Students are advised not to carry water bottles.

5. Teachers reminding the students regarding lighter school bags

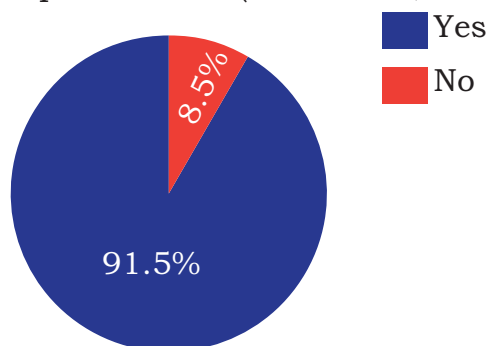
Number of responses: 347 (Yes-96.0%, No-4.0%)



Nine per cent of the Heads responded with a yes that their teachers are constantly reminding the students to keep their bags light, whereas, 4 per cent of them denied doing so.

6. Students following a time table at the primary level

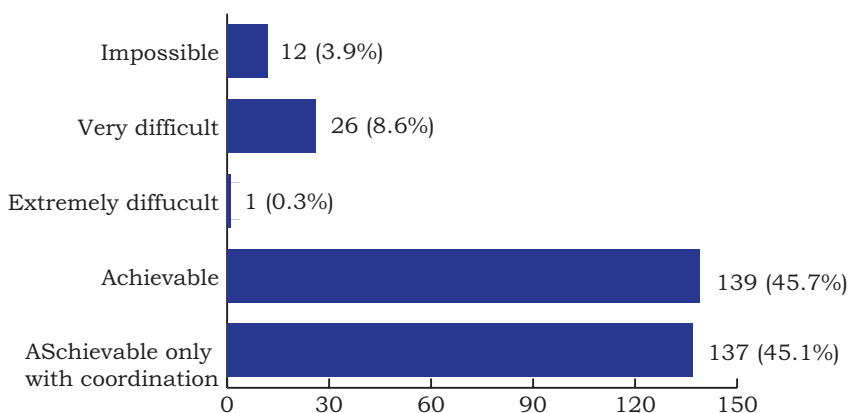
Number of responses: 343 (Yes-91.5%, No-8.5%)



We can clearly see in the above mentioned image that in 91.5 per cent (314) of the schools, students follow the time table at the primary level. Whereas, in 8.5 per cent (29) schools, it is still a no.

7. Views of the School Heads about considering the weight of school bags at the upper primary level

Number of responses: 304

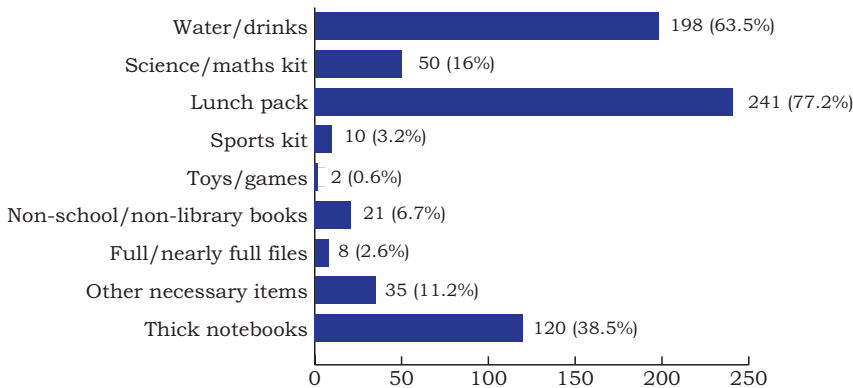


Maximum number of schools were 45.7 per cent (139) who responded positively with achievable as their answer. Around 45.1 per cent (137) said that it is achievable but only with some coordination. However, 3.9 per cent (12) School Heads responded that it is impossible to consider the same while (8.6%) heads

found it very difficult and one head (0.3%) said it is extremely difficult.

8. Students usually carry the following items from home to school

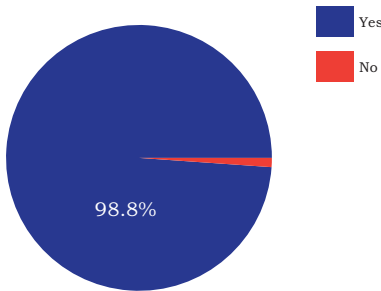
Number of responses: 312



Maximum School Heads (77.2%) say that the students usually carry lunch pack, followed by water or drinks (63.5%), thick notebooks (38.5%), science and math kit (16%). According to the respondents, students are very less likely to carry toys (0.6%), sports kit (3.2%), full or nearly full files (2.6%), non-school and non-library books and other necessary items (11.2%).

9. Whether drinking water is provided by the school

Number of responses: 346 (Yes-98.8%, No-1.2%)



Out of 346 head of the schools 98.8 per cent said drinking water is provided by the school.

10. Choice of students on drinking water

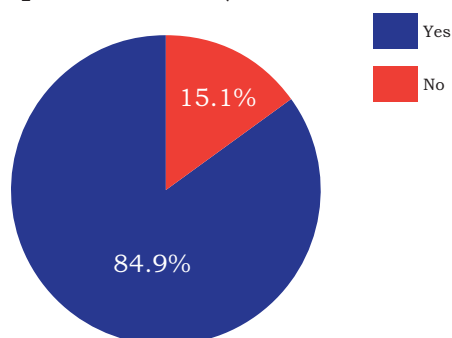
Number of responses: 344 (Yes-87.2%, No-12.8%)



Out of 344 School Heads, of the schools 87.2 per cent said their students choose to drink water from school.

11. Number of students drinking potable water from school

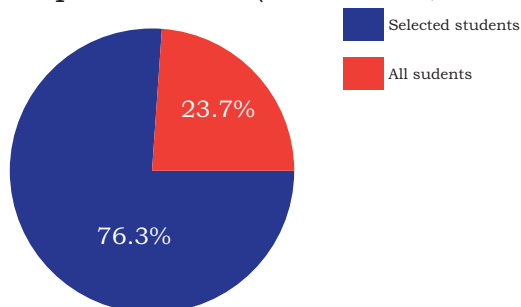
Number of responses: 345 (Yes-84.9%, No-15.1%)



Out of 345 School Heads, 84.9 per cent said students drink potable water from school.

12. Locker provided by school to students

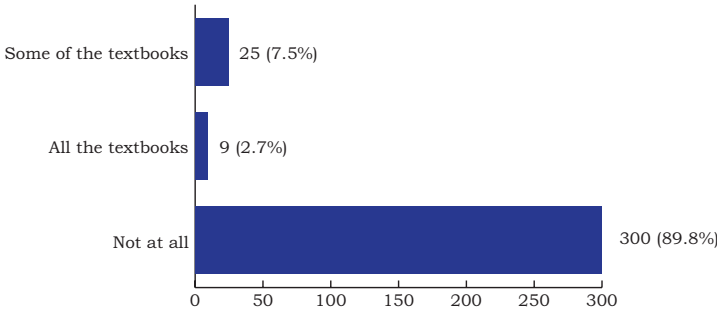
Number of responses: 198 (Yes-76.3%, No-23.7%)



Maximum number of schools (77%) provide lockers to selected students.

13. Providing double sets of textbooks to students

Number of responses: 334



Most of the schools (86.4%) do not provide double sets of textbooks of any subject to the students, whereas, 10.2 per cent (12) of schools provide double sets of some textbooks and 3.4% (4) schools provide them for all.

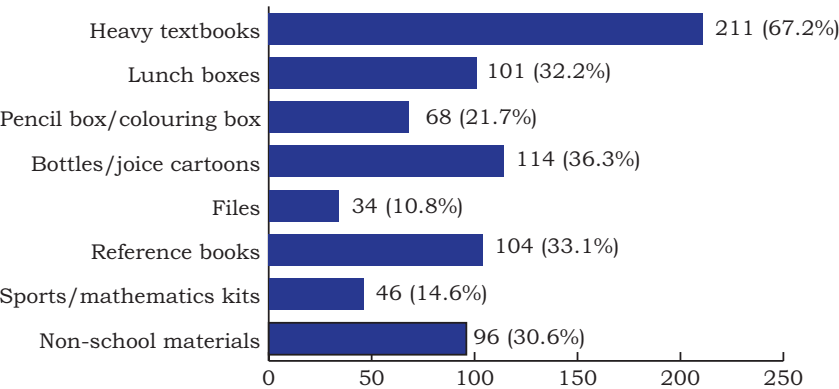
14. Number of medically certified students who are not fit to carry heavy bags

Number of responses: 307

According to the survey, in these 307 schools the total student enrolment is found to be approximately 2,82,535. Out of this total enrolment, number of medically certified students who are not fit to carry heavy bags are 506 (~ 0.179 %).

15. Order of preference of physical items that contribute to the increasing weight of the bags

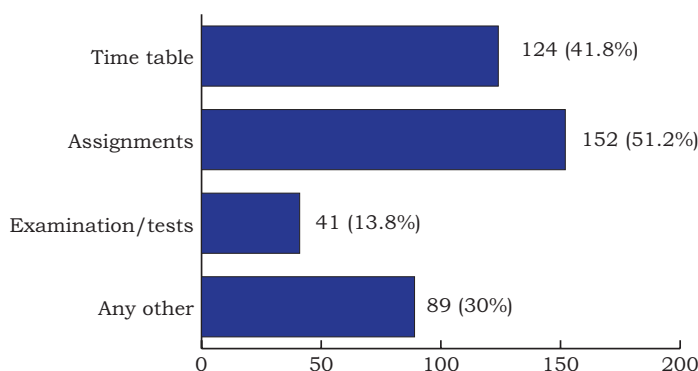
Number of responses: 314



Out of total 314 School Heads, ordered the physical items which contribute to increase weight of bags. According to them, heavy textbooks (67.2%) are the main physical items which contribute to the increase in weight of the bags. Other items which contribute to the increase in weight of the bags are bottles or juice cartons (36.3%), reference books (33.1%), lunch boxes (32.2%), non-school materials (30.6%), pencil or colouring boxes (21.7%), sports or mathematics kits (14.6%) and files (10.8%).

16. Preferred practices in school which results in heavy school bag

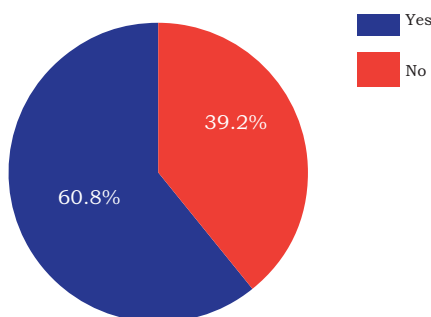
Number of responses: 297



Total 297 School Heads said, according to their preference, there are several practices in schools which contribute in heavy school bags. Those are assignments (51.2%), time tables (41.8%), any other (30%) and examinations (13.8%) respectively.

17. Daily files with loose sheets more helpful than note books?

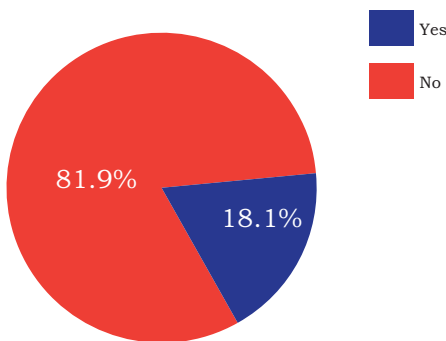
Number of responses:
334 (Yes-60.8%,
No-39.2%)



Among 334 School Heads, 60.8 per cent said daily files with loose sheets are more helpful then notebooks.

18. Does the layout of school premises present or enhance the problem?

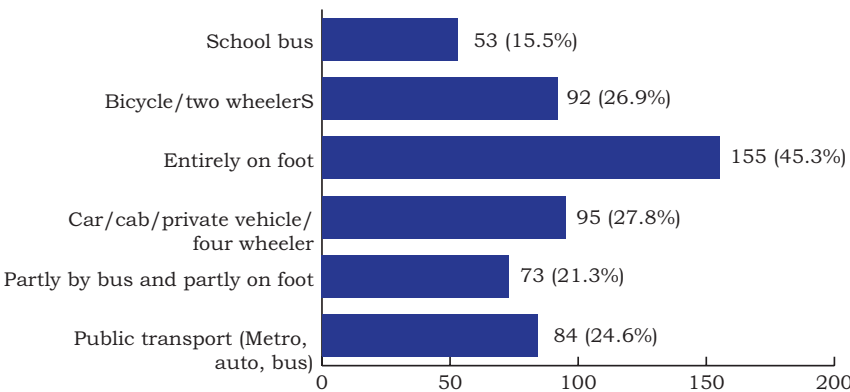
Number of responses: 337 (Yes-18.1%, No-81.9%)



Out of 334 School Heads, 18.1% said the layout of school premises present or enhance the problem of heavy weight of the school bag.

19. Conveyance used by students to commute to school

Number of responses: 342

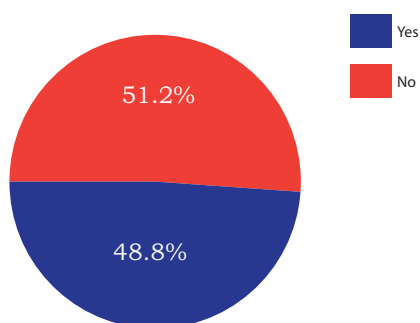


342 out of School Heads, 45.3 per cent informed that students commute to school entirely on foot, other modes of commuting to school are car/cab/private vehicle/four vehicle (27.8%), bicycle/two wheeler (26.9%), public transport (metro, auto, bus) (24.6%),

partly by bus and partly on foot (21.3%) and by school bus (15.5%).

20. Attempt of schools to weigh the bags of children and the relevant findings

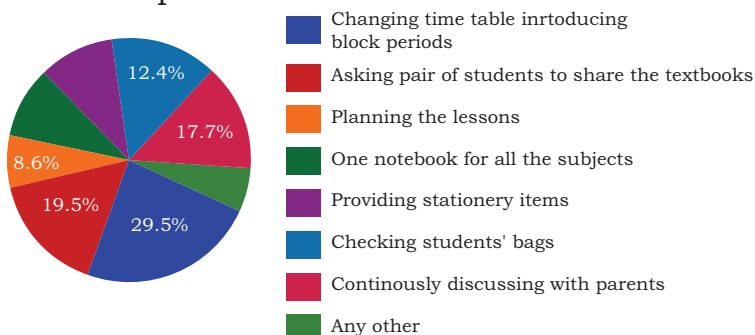
Number of responses: 344 (Yes-48.8%, No-51.2%)



Out of 344 School Heads, 48.8% said the school attempts to weigh the bags of children.

21. Practices adopted by the schools to reduce the weight of the schoolbags

Number of responses: 339



339 School Heads, said there are some practices adopted by the schools to reduce the weight of the school bags. Those are—changing time table introducing block periods (29.5%), asking a pair of students to share the textbooks (19.8%), planning the lessons (8.6%), checking students' bags (12.4 %), continuously discussing with parents (17.7%) and others are one note book for all subjects, providing stationary items and any other, etc.

Appendix C

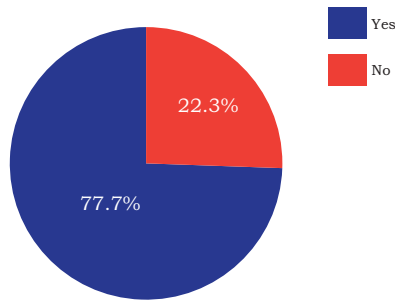
Findings of the Analysis of Responses on School Bag from Parents

Total number of responses: 2992

Issue-wise findings are given below:

1. Whether parents have found handling of heavy school bag is a serious problem with their child

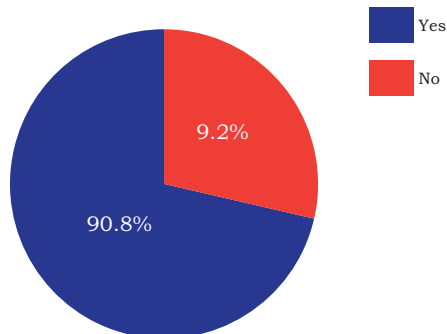
Total Responses- 2875 (Yes-77.7%, No-22.3%)



Out of 2875 parents almost 77.7 percent said that handling of heavy school bag is a serious problem which they often discuss with their child and family.

2. Number of parents who check their ward's bag often

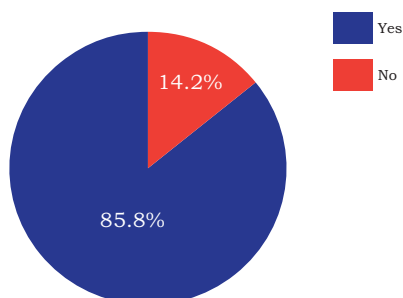
Total Responses- 2870 (Yes-90.8%, No-9.2%)



The survey data reveals that 90.8 per cent parents often check their children's bag.

3. Percentage of parents talk to their children on the issue of weight of the bag and how to reduce it

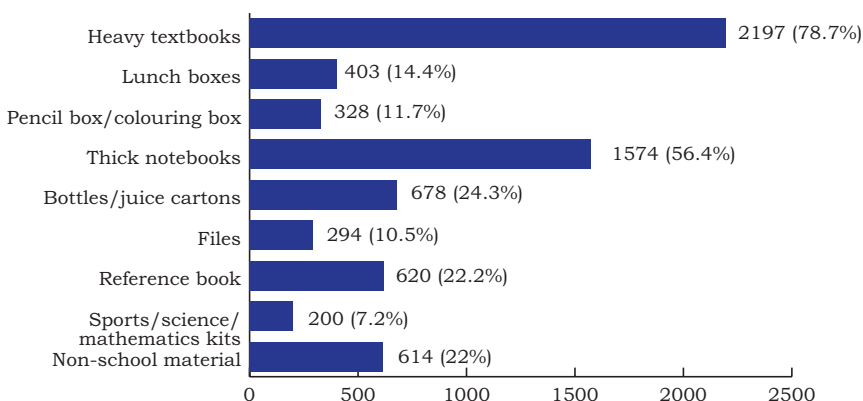
Total Responses- 2866 (Yes-85.8%, No-14.2%)



Heavy bag is a major concern among parents and their children. 85.8 per cent of parents talk to their children on the issue of weight of the bag and how to reduce it.

4. Major reasons for the heavy bag mentioned by parents

Total Responses- 2792

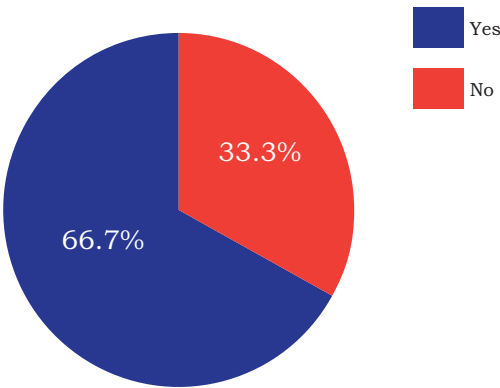


Major reasons for the heavy bag mentioned by parents are heavy textbooks (78.7%), thick notebooks (56.4%) and reference books (22.2%). Other reasons are bottles or juice carton (24.3%), non-school material (22%), lunch boxes (14.4%), pencilbox or colouring box (11.7%),

files (10.5%) and sports or science or mathematics kits (7.2%), etc.

5. Percentage of parents received any guidelines regarding weight of school bag

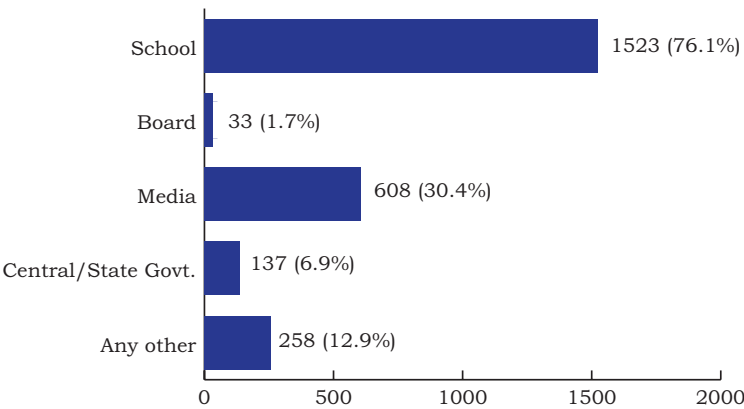
Total Responses- 2861 (Yes-66.7%, No-33.3%)



Out of total 1467 parents, 57 per cent received guidelines regarding weight of school bag.

6. Organisations from which parents received guidelines

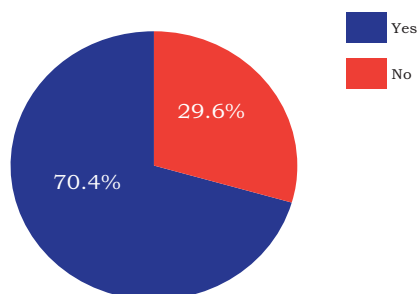
Total Responses-2000



Parents who received any guidelines regarding school bag weight mentioned that they mostly received those guidelines from school (76.1%), media (30.4%) and from other organisations (12.9%).

7. Percentage of parents whose ward(s) is/are regularly reminded by their teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible

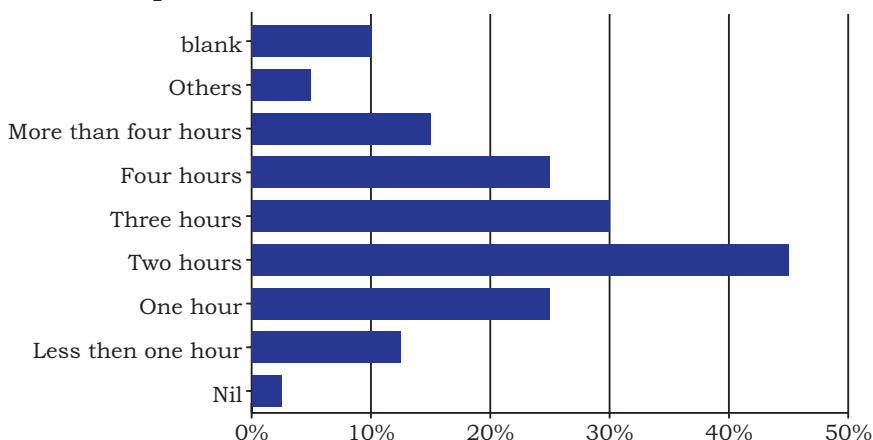
Total Responses-2865 (Yes-70.4%, No-29.6%)



Among all respondents most of the parents (70.4%) said their are regularly reminded by their teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible.

8. Hours perday child(ren) is/are spending on homework

Total Responses-2915



9. Specific views and suggestions of parents for reduction of weight of school bag

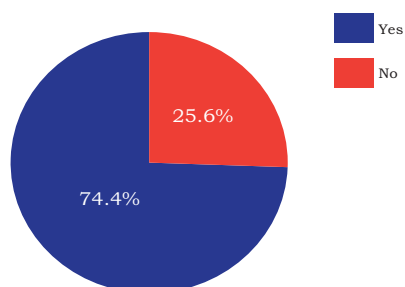
Total Responses-2692

The important suggestions that came up from the survey are—

- Sharing books with classmates
- Semester-wise textbooks
- Provision of drinking water in the school
- Provision of lockers for students
- Alternative homework in different subjects
- Reduction in the weight of textbooks
- Keeping textbooks in school
- Use of smart classes
- Only three subjects should be taught in one day so that the child need not carry all the five books a day
- Thin notebooks, not separated as classwork and homework
- Books to be divided into parts
- One notebook for all subjects
- Bringing the notebooks and books according to their respective time tables
- Class library
- Students should not carry reference books and mathematical and science kits daily
- extra materials for craft should be kept at school
- No homework

Appendix D**Findings of the Analysis of Responses on School Bags from Students****Total number of responses: 3624****Issue wise findings are given below****1. Handling of heavy school bag a serious problem for students**

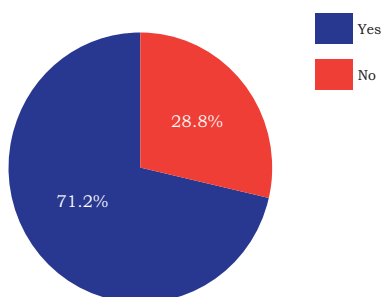
Total Responses-3554 (Yes-74.4%, No-25.6%)



Out of total 3554 students, 74.4 per cent said they think handling of heavy school bag is a serious problem.

2. Percentage of students who like their school bags

Total Responses-3553 (Yes-71.2%, No-28.8%)



Out of total 3553 students, 71.2 per cent students like their school bags.

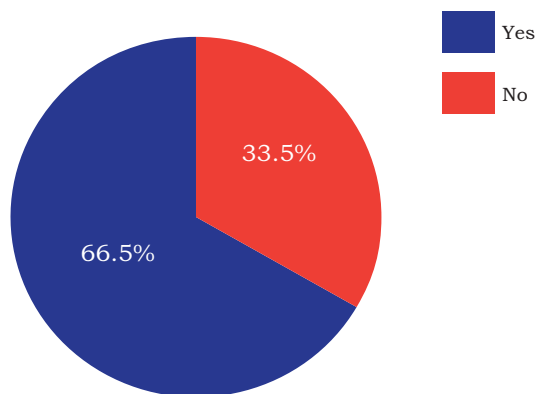
3. Some important reasons for students do not like or like their school bags

Total Responses-2479

- Lightweight
- Bag is important for carrying textbooks and study material
- Easy to carry
- It is very colorful
- For safety purpose
- It protects my books
- Because it is the only way to carry our books and notebooks
- I do not like my school bag because it is very heavy
- I do not know just habituated with it.
- We can bring everything so that teachers do not scold us.
- No, I do not like my school bag. It feels like an unnecessary load on my back.
- Because, i can carry lunch.
- Because it reminds us that we are going to school and we are a student.

4. **Percentage of students who want school-bag-free education**

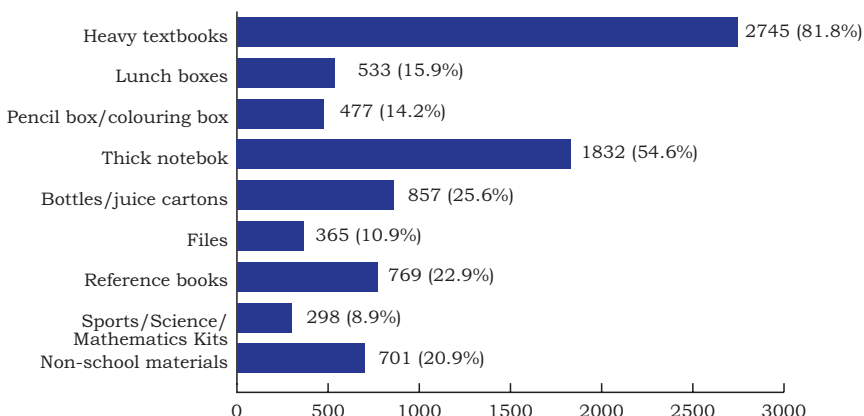
Total Responses-3539 (Yes-66.5%, No-33.5%)



Out of total 3539 student 66.5 per cent said they want school-bag-free education.

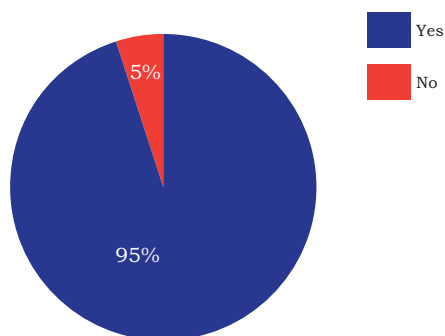
5. Major reasons students find their bag heavy

Total Responses-3354



6. Percentage of Students trying to keep their bag lighter

Total Responses-3542 (Yes-95.0%, No-5.0%)



Out of total 3542 students, 95 per cent said they try to keep their school bags light.

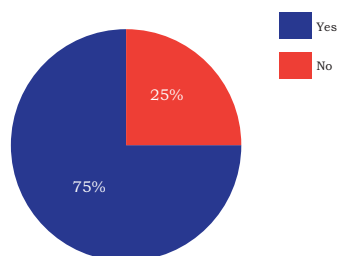
7. Items, students think are very important and cannot be left at home

Total Responses-3430

- Notebooks
- Water bottle
- Textbooks

- Textbooks, notebooks, mathematical box, pens
- Textbook, notebooks lunch box, bottle
- Textbooks, notebooks, pencils box and plate
- Lunch box
- NCERT books and one rough notebook
- Books and notebooks, geometry box, tiffin, water bottle
- Textbooks, pen, pencils, sharpner, eraser, books, tiffin, water bottle

8. Percentage of students who received any guidelines regarding weight

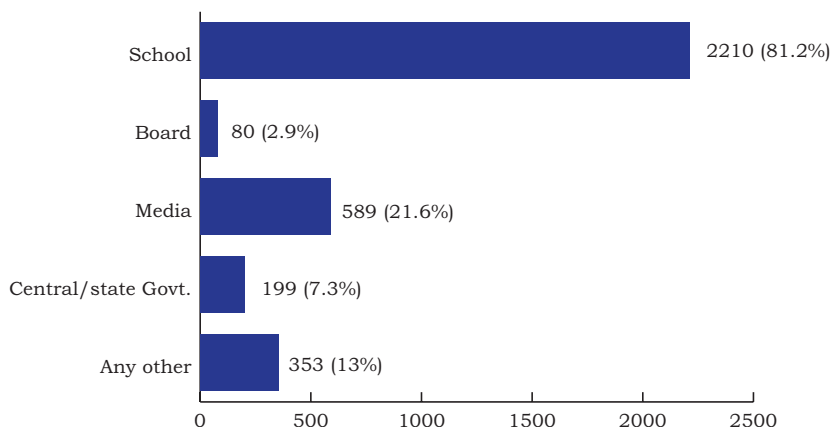


Total Responses-3530 (Yes-75.0%, No-25.0%)

Out of total 3530 students 75 per cent said they received any guidelines regarding weight of the school bag.

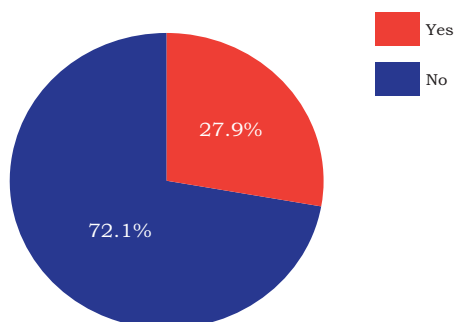
9. Organisations from which students received guidelines

Total Responses-2723



10. Percentage of students regularly reminded by teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible

Total Responses-3519 (Yes-72.1%, No-27.9%)



Out of total 3519 students, 72.1 per cent said they are regularly reminded by teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible.

11. Specific views and suggestion for reducing the weight of schoolbag

Total Responses-3257

- Keep all books in the school library.
- Reduce the weight of heavy textbooks.
- Light weight material supplied
- Arranged drinking water
- No reference book
- Lockers or cupboards should be provided at school
- No suggestion
- School bag free education
- Change examinations system
- No homework
- Sharing of books
- Lighter textbooks
- Text books should be kept in school
- Smart classes,

- Weight of textbooks and notebooks should be reduced, mid-day meal should be provided
- Bring session wise books
- Classwork and homework copies must be one and thin.
- Use thin notebooks
- Bring books according to the time table. Use thin notebooks. Use only one note book for classwork and homework
- Digital books in *vidyalaya*
- Changing time table, introducing block periods so that students don't need to bring more subjects' book daily, weight of textbooks should be less.
- Dictionary and other additional books should be avoided.

Class IX	1	2	3	4	Recess			5	6	7	8
Mon	Hindi	Hindi	Maths	English				Library	Computer	Social Studies	Art Education
Tue	Hindi	Hindi	Art Education	English				Science	Science	Maths	Maths
Wed	Hindi	Social Studies	Maths	Work Experience				Science	Computer (Practical)	English	English
Thu	Hindi	Social Studies	Maths	Maths				Art	Art	Science	Science
Fri	Hindi	Social Studies	English	English				Science	Work Experience	Games	Games
Sat	CCA	CCA	Maths	English				Science	Yoga	Social Studies	Social Studies

Appendix E

Class VIII	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mon	Maths	Social Studies	English	English	Science	Computer	Sanskrit	Yoga
Tue	Maths	Maths	English	Hindi	Science	Science	Sanskrit	Computer (Practical)
Wed	Social Studies	Social Studies	English	Hindi	Science	Sanskrit	Games	Games
Thu	Maths	Art Education	English	Hindi	Science	Library	Social Studies	Social Studies
Fri	Maths	Social Studies	English	Hindi	Art	Art Edu./ German	Work Exp./ German	Work Exp./ German
Sat	CCA	CCA	Hindi	Hindi	Science	Music	Maths	Maths

Appendix F

Guidelines on Homework for Schools

The concept of time on task need to be seen as an essential point for taking stock of the total time that children spend actively on learning. This would include time spent on listening, reading, writing, doing activities, discussing, etc. It would not include waiting for one's turn, copying from the board or revising. Particularly in multi-grade classes, planning and designing of learning activities for children need to ensure that children's time on task is maximised. Total study time that is expected from students in both face-to-face and self-study or homework needs to be accounted for while planning the syllabus or course of study for students, especially as they go to higher grades (NCF-2005).

It is often found that even small children in Classes I and II are being given heavy homework. This places stress on them and also on their parents. Then the mechanical kind of homework, such as, cursive writing, copying some text from book or newspaper, etc., does not help in more learning.

For making homework an interesting and joyful exercise following guidelines may be followed—

1. As children in Classes I and II are too small to sit for long hours doing homework, they need not be given any kind of homework. Rather they need to be encouraged in the class to speak about – how they spent their evening at home, games they played, foods they eat, etc.
2. For Classes III, IV and V—maximum of two hours of homework per week need to be given to students. For providing homework in these classes, teachers need to plan some creative assignments, such as,

- (a) Evening routine for every child
- (b) Dinner they took previous night—Food items, ingredients, their likes and dislikes about different kinds of foods.
- (c) Who does what at their home? (Child can answer in the form of posters, table, para, etc.)
- (d) Conversation with grandparents/parents/siblings/neighbours held the previous evening
- (e) Games played previous evening
- (f) Any party they attended last evening
- (g) Any incident which happened previous evening, which the child liked or disliked.

(This may be done in the form of story, poem, poster and dialogue, etc. Child may write on the paper or make points and may be encouraged to present in the classroom. This is a suggestive list. Teachers may create more interesting home work. Teachers need to keep in view that they need not to give uniform/similar home work to every child in the class. They can give children homework as per their interest and contexts. Heads of schools need to ensure that teachers need to arrange a discussion and assessment of home work done by the students on weekly basis or on alternate days. The homework given may further be linked with concepts given in different subjects areas and at that stage.)

3. For Classes VI-VIII, maximum of one hour a day (about five to six hours a week)- At this stage, children develop habit of sitting little longer with concentration, so they can be given home works such as—

- (a) Writing a story, essay or article on contemporary issues.
- (b) Writing an article about the problems in the locality.
- (c) Measures for saving electricity and petrol.
- (d) Consumption pattern of sugar, wheat, rice, tea in the family (daily and weekly).

- (e) Daily routine of the child.
- (f) Making models or posters on contemporary issue which the child knows.
- (g) Posters or slogans on environmental issues.
- (h) Recording interview of grandparent or parents on an issue the child likes to discuss.

(This is a suggestive list. Teachers may create more interesting homework. Teachers need to keep in view that they need not give uniform/similar homework to every child in the class. They can give children homework as per their interest and contexts. Heads of the school need to ensure that teachers need to arrange a discussion and assessment of home work done by the students on weekly basis or on alternate day.)

4. For Secondary and Higher Secondary Stages, maximum of two hours a day (about 10 to 12 hours a week) is recommended. This time can be utilised by the students on project work. Interdisciplinary project work may be planned by the teachers to be given to students calculating the time taken. Thus the students work on their project and can contribute to the completion of syllabus in different subject areas. Further, School Heads need to ensure that teachers need to arrange a discussion and assessment of home work done by the students weekly or on alternate days.
5. There is also a need to keep track of time and type of homework given to the children and also their mapping with the concepts given in syllabi and textbooks of different subject areas especially from Class VI onwards. One of the best ways of regulating the load of homework is to have an operative tool at class level to be used daily in collaboration with the class teachers. Some schools are regulating the quantum of

homework given through a log sheet (a suggestive sample is given below which may be modified by the school as per the need and taking care of environmental concerns) maintained in the class. These log sheets are maintained by the class captain under the guidance of class teacher. Every teacher enters the homework in that sheet at the end of the class.

NAME OF THE SCHOOL					
Class: Section: Class Teacher: Class Monitor: Date:					
Subject	Subject Teacher	Concept	Homework given	Time required in min.	Sig. of Teacher
EVS (Class III-V)					
From Class (III-X)					
Mathematics					
Science					
Language-I					
Language-II					
Language-III					
Social Science					
Going beyond subjects/ textbooks					
Others					
Total Signature of class Teacher: Signature of Principal:					

The Principal will ensure that the quantum of homework in the specific class should not exceed the limit (in term of hours) as specified in this report at page number 12.

Appendix G-1**Questionnaire for the Assessment of Problem of Weight of School Bags in Schools****(For School Heads)**

Ministry of Education has constituted an Expert Group to address the problem of weight of school bags. The Expert Group in its first meeting decided to conduct a survey with students, teachers, school heads and parents on the issue of weight of school bag. In this context, ... following questionnaire has been prepared for School Heads to look deep into the issues of weight of school bag. School Heads are requested to fill up the questionnaire and send it back to the following address:

Please tick the box which is applicable or provide the asked information. Write N/A if the question does not apply to your school.

1. Name and Address of the School
(optional)
2. Total School Enrolment
3. Total number of Classes in the School
4. Is the handling of heavy school bags considered to be a serious problem at your school ?
Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Have you received complaints about school bag weight during the present academic year from—
 - the students? ☐ • the school council? ☐
 - the parents? ☐ • the teacher ☐
 - Others (specify) _____

6. During this academic year, indicate if the school

- has already taken action
- plans to take action
- is taking action now
- is not taking any action

7. Action at your school means

- staff meetings
- meetings for parents
- school council meetings
- student activities
- others (specify)

8. Are your students regularly reminded by their teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible?

Yes

No

9. Do pupils at primary level follow time-table that is textbook based?

Yes

No

10. At upper primary level, do you think that taking into consideration of textbook weight in the drawing up of the weekly timetable is

- impossible?
- very difficult?
- extremely difficult?
- achievable?
- achievable only with co-ordination ?

11. At secondary level, how many reference books students carry along with textbooks of 200 pages and over are meant to be used in more than one academic year?

12. Does majority of pupils/students carry the following items from home?

- water/drinks
- Science/Maths kit
- lunch pack
- sports kit
- toys/games
- non-school/non-library books
- full/nearly full files
- other unnecessary items
- thick notebooks

13. (A) Does school provide drinking water facility?

Yes

No

(B) What is the choice of children?

- They drink water from school
- They drink water brought from home

14. Your school provides a locker facility to

“selected” students

all students

15. Your school provide double sets

- of some of the textbooks
- of all the textbooks
- not at all

16. What is the approximate number of students who have been medically certified as unable to carry a heavy school bag during this academic year?

17. Enumerate, in order of importance, the physical items which, in your opinion, contribute to excessive weight, marking the most important as Number 1.

- Heavy textbooks
- Lunch boxes
- Pencil box/colouring box
- Thick notebooks
- Bottles/juice cartons
- Files
- Reference books
- Sports/Mathematics Kits
- Non-school materials

18. Enumerate in order of importance, the following practices in school which contribute to increase the weight of school bag.

- Time Table
- Assignments
- Examination/Test
- Any other

19. Does the use of a daily file/s (with loose sheets to be grouped later) instead of note books help reduce the weight of school bag?

Yes

No

20. Does the layout of the school premises present additional problems, e.g., stairs, distances; subject-specific classes?

Yes

No

21. How many subjects does the school offer for the following classes

Class	No. of subjects	Name of subjects
I		
II		
III		
IV		
V		
VI		
VII		
VIII		
IX		
X		
XI		
XII		

**For Classes XI and XII, details of subjects in tune with stream may be given separately.*

22. Majority of students come to the school—

- by school bus
- by bicycle /two-wheeler
- on foot
- by car/Cab/PrivateVehicle/anyother Four Vehicle
- partly by bus and partly on foot
- Public Transport (Metro, Auto, Bus)

23. Is there any attempt on the part of the school to weigh bags of children?

Yes ☐

No ☐

In case of Yes, please mention the general findings.

24. What are the arrangements school makes for Children with Special Needs with regard to school bag?

25. There are some best practices which schools use to reduce the weight of the school bags. Which one of the following can be implemented in your school with ease?

- Changing time table introducing block periods so that students don't need to bring more subjects' books daily ☐
- Asking pair of students to share the textbooks ☐
- Planning the lessons in the way students don't need textbooks in the class and one note book for all the subjects ☐
- Providing stationery items for specific activities ☐

- Checking students' bags and making them understand to carry light bag ☐
- Continuously discussing with parents about the consequences of heavy bag and unnecessary items ☐
- Any other (practices) _____

26. (A) Do you have homework policy?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(B) Kindly provide in terms of hours class-wise homework given to students

Class	Hours of Homework	Type of Homework
I		
II		
III		
IV		
V		
VI		
VII		
VIII		
IX		
X		
XI		
XII		

27. School's own contribution to this Survey

1. List a maximum of four issues that are relevant and important to this survey but which have NOT been included above (in point form, please)

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

2. You are requested to kindly discuss issues related to reduction of school bag with your teaching staff and if possible with school student council and provide suggestions on how this problem can be addressed. In **Section A** include suggestions which are applicable to your school; in **Section B** include suggestions of more general applicability issue wise.

2.1 Section A (School related issues)

Textbook (weight)

Time Table _____

Homework _____

Projects/Assignments _____

No. of subjects _____

2.2 Section B (Individual)

Personal Items

water _____

Lunch Box _____

Material/weight of bag _____

Parents' choice _____

3. What do you think student-friendly school bags need to contain? Kindly give essential items below.

4. Please randomly weigh school bags of five students per class and also select randomly five bags for weighing each item of the bag separately and make tables in the following way-

I.

Classes	1		2		3		4		5
	Weight of student	Weight of school bag	Weight of student	Weight of school bag	Weight of student	Weight of school bag	Weight of student	Weight of school bag	Weight of school bag
	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	kg	Kg
I									
II									
III									
IV									
V									
VI									
VII									
VIII									
IX									
X									
XI									
XII									

II.

School Bag	Total weight	Weight of empty school bag	Pencil Box	Lunch Box	Text books	Note books	Any other item (please mention the name and weight)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

Note: Two more questionnaires one for parents and the other for students are also prepared and attached herewith. You are requested to randomly distribute these questionnaires to some of the parents and students and get the filled up questionnaire back and submit these along with this questionnaire on the aforesaid address.

Signature of Head of School

School Stamp

Date

Appendix G-2**Questionnaire for the Assessment of Problem of Weight of School Bags in Schools****Parents**

Ministry of Education has constituted an Expert Group to address the problem of weight of school bags. The Expert Group in its first meeting decided to have a survey with students, teachers, school heads and parents on the issue of weight of school bag. In this context, the following questionnaire has been prepared for parents to have their views on issues of weight of school bag. Parents are requested to kindly fill up the questionnaire and give it back to the concerned survey official. Please tick the box which is applicable or provide the information asked. Write N/A if the question does not apply to your school.

1. Name (optional)
2. Classes in which your ward(s) are studying
3. Name of school
4. Is the handling of heavy school bag a serious problem which you often discuss with your child and family?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Do you check your ward's bag often?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Do you talk to your word on the issue of weight of the bag and how to reduce it?
 Yes ☐ No ☐

7. What major reasons do you find for the heavy bag?

- Heavy textbooks
- Lunch boxes
- Pencil box/colouring box
- Almanac (school dairy)
- Thick notebooks
- Bottles/juice cartons
- Files
- Reference books
- Sports/Science/Mathematics Kits
- Non-school materials

8. Have you received any guidelines regarding weight?

Yes

No

If yes from whom?

1. School _____
2. Board _____
3. Media _____
4. Central/State Govt _____
5. Any other _____

9. Are your ward(s) regularly reminded by their teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible?

Yes

No

10. How many hours per day your child(ren) is/are spending on homework

- (i) Class _____ Hrs _____ Type of Homework _____
- (ii) Class _____ Hrs _____ Type of Homework _____
- (iii) Class _____ Hrs _____ Type of Homework _____

11. What are the subjects your child(ren) is/are studying in the school

- (i) Class _____ Subjects _____
- (ii) Class _____ Subjects _____
- (iii) Class _____ Subjects _____

[illegible]

Appendix G-3

Questionnaire for the Assessment of Problem of Weight of School Bags in Schools

Students

Ministry of Education has constituted an Expert Group to address the problem of weight of school bags. The Expert Group in its first meeting decided to conduct a survey with students, teachers, school heads and parents on the issue of weight of school bag, In this context, following questionnaire has been prepared for Students to have their views on issues of weight of school bag. Students (From VI onwards) are requested to kindly fill up the questionnaire and give it back to the concerned survey official. Please tick mark the box which is applicable or provide the asked information. Write N/A if the question does not apply to your school.

1. Name (optional)
2. Classes in which your ward(s) are studying
3. Name of school
4. Is the handling of heavy school bag a serious problem which you often discuss with your friends and family?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Do you like your school bag?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Do you want school bag free education?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
7. What major reasons do you find for the heavy bag?
 - Heavy textbooks
 - lunch boxes?

- Pencil box/colouring box
- Thick notebooks?
- Bottles juice cartons
- Files
- Reference books
- Sports/Science/Mathematics Kits
- Non-school materials

8. Are you trying to keep your bag lighter?

Yes

No

9. What are the items, which you can avoid carrying to make your bag lighter?

10. What are the items, which you think are very important and cannot be left ?

11. Have you received any guidelines regarding weight of school bag?

Yes

No

If yes from whom

1. School _____ 3. Media _____

2. Board _____ 4. Central/State Govt _____

5. Any other _____

12. Are you regularly reminded by teachers to keep the school bag as light as possible?

Yes ☐

No ☐

13. How many hours per day, are you spending on homework?

Hours/day _____

Type of Homework _____

14. What are the subjects you are studying in the school?

Subjects _____

15. Kindly give your specific views and suggestions for reducing the weight of school bag.

Appendix H

F. No. 1-4/2018-IS-3
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education & Literacy
IS-3 Section

New Delhi, 5th October, 2018

Order

Sub: Constitution of Expert Group for framing of policy on children school bag as in the lines of "Children School Bags (Limitation on Weight) Bill, 2006"- reg.

Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras in its judgment dated 29.05.2018 in "M. Purushothaman Vs. Union of India" (WP No. 25680 of 2018) has directed the Union of India to formulate a policy on children school bag as on the lines of "Children School Bags (Limitation on Weight) Bill, 2006".

2. In view of the above, it has been decided with the approval of the competent authority to constitute an Expert Group with the following composition:-

Sl. No.	Name	Details
1.	Prof. Ranjana Arora, Department Head, Curriculum Development and Research in School and Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Development, NCERT	Convenor
2.	Sh. S. Vijaya Kumar, Joint Commissioner (Acad.), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.	Member
3.	Sh. A. N. Ramachandra, Joint Commissioner (Academic, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti	Member
4.	Dr. Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academics) & Chief Vigilance Officer, Central Board of Secondary Education	Member
5.	Representative from Education Department, Govt. of Telangana	Member
6.	Representative from Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra	Member

P.T.O.

Accordingly, it is requested to take necessary action to formulate a draft policy on children school bag in pursuance of the direction of Hon'ble High Court of Madras, and submit within a period of one month.



(Manjeet Kumar)

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India

Tele. No. 23073542

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Copy to:

1. Director (NCERT), Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016.
2. Prof. Ranjana Arora, Department Head, Curriculum Studies, Curriculum Development and Research in School and Teacher Education and Teacher Professional Development, NCERT Campus, Adchini, New Delhi, Delhi 110016.
3. Sh. S. Vijaya Kumar, Joint Commissioner (Acad), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, 18, Institutional Area, Shaheed Jeet Singh Marg, New Delhi-110016 (email: icacadkvs@gmail.com)
4. Sh. A. N. Ramachandra, Joint Commissioner (Academic), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, B-15, Institutional Area, Sector 62, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201307 (email: icacad.nvs@gov.in)
5. Dr. Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academics) & Chief Vigilance Officer, Central Board of Secondary Education (Head Office), "Shiksha Kendra", 2, Community Centre Preet Vihar, Delhi- 110092, Email: directoracad.cbse@nic.in and cvoebse@nic.in
6. Secy. Education, Govt. of Telangana with the request to nominate a representative in this regard.
7. Secy. Education, Govt. of Maharashtra with the request to nominate a representative in this regard.



विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते



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NCERT

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