

## **Regarding need to release pending funds allocated under Samagra Shiksha Scheme to Tamil Nadu-Laid**

**SHRI K. E. PRAKASH (ERODE):** Tamil Nadu maintains a literacy rate well above national average, and near universal gross enrolment in primary and upper-primary schools. These gains were achieved through decades of investment in classrooms, teachers and social support systems. Yet the Union has withheld more than 3548.22 crore under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme fund meant for school infrastructure, teacher salaries, maintenance and basic learning support for nearly 43.94 lakh students, 2.21 lakh teachers, and 32,701 staff members across Tamil Nadu. This withholding strikes at the heart of public good. Tamil Nadu challenged this in the Supreme Court under Article 131. Senior advocates argued that conditioning statutory education funds on adopting unrelated policies is unconstitutional, arbitrary and corrosive to democracy. Union's justification is that Tamil Nadu did not sign certain MoUs linked to NEP 2020 and PM SHRI. This defence collapses immediately because Samagra Shiksha is a centrally sponsored scheme under the Right to Education Act not a reward for policy compliance. The Union has released funds to other States during the same period. The union must release the funds immediately for the cause of education which act as a weapon to strengthen the children, teachers and the foundation of the nation itself.