

Universal lab-lib-lav calculus

TO SQUARELY ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE inadequacy of government elementaries, and inspired by a nascent initiative in Chennai to provide all municipal schools with a modest laboratory, library and lavatories, *EducationWorld* requested Dr. A.S. Seetharamu, hitherto professor of education at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore to estimate the expense of equipping every government elementary school countrywide with lab-lib-lav facilities.

According to Seetharamu, of India's 1,196,663 (1.20 million) elementary schools, 146,310 (0.14 million) are private unaided institutions which are generally well equipped in terms of infrastructure such as labs, libraries and sanitation. Prof. Seetharamu's estimates of provisioning government elementaries with lab-lib-lav facilities are presented below.



	Facility	Unit price (Rs.)	No. of elementaries in need (000)	No. of units required (000)	Expenditure estimate (Rs. crore)
(i)	Common toilets	25,000	354	709	1,775
(ii)	Girls' toilets	25,000	540	1,081	2,705
(iii)	Water connection for (i) & (ii) above *	10,000	895	895	895
(iv)	Library facility (including additions)				
	a. Small libraries	100,000	753	753	7,535
	b. Reading corners for small schools **	25,000	300	300	750
(v)	Laboratory facility (including additions) ***	200,000	753	753	15,070
(vi)	Large building for — library, laboratory & other children-friendly facilities	200,000	753	753	15,070
(vii)	Miscellaneous — furniture for laboratory, library, reading corner	25,000	1,050	1,050	2,625
(viii)	Recurring maintenance expenditure for lab-lib-lav (annual)	12,000	1,050	1,050	1,300
(ix)	Total lab-lib-lav expenditure for government primaries and upper primaries				47,725

* 1 million schools already have drinking water facility. Hence unit cost will be low for such schools

** Although some elementaries may already have a library facility, this has not been taken into account

*** Although some established schools may already have labs, this has not been taken into account

Source: NUEPA and MHRD data — processed by Dr. A.S. Seetharamu