

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 37
ANSWERED ON 06.12.2023

SMART CLASSES IN RURAL AREA

37 SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA:

Will the MINISTER OF EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of practical difficulties faced by the Union Government in introducing smart classes in rural areas; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the technology is yet to set its footprints in many schools of interior parts of the country for students to attain digital literacy and if so, the steps taken in this regard during the last two years?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) & (b): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) & (B) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 37 FOR REPLY ON 6th DECEMBER, 2023 ASKED BY HON'BLE MP SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA REGARDING SMART CLASSES IN RURAL AREA.

(a) & (b): Education is in the Concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the administrative control of respective State Government and UT Administration.

Government of India, through its centrally sponsored scheme Samagra Shiksha, implements the Integrated Scheme for School Education, from 2018-19. Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education. Samagra Shiksha is implemented in partnership with all the States and UTs and financial assistance is provided to all States and UTs for various components including strengthening of Smart Classrooms.

Like other components of Samagra Shiksha, the funds of setting up Smart Classrooms is also released to State/ UTs based on the requirement communicated by them in the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B). The implementation part i.e. set up of smart classroom comes under the purview of respective State Government and UT Administration. There is a provision of Smart Class rooms (2 smart classrooms per school) of Rs. 2.40 lakh as non-recurring grant and the recurring grant of Rs. 0.38 lakh (including E Content and Digital Resources, Charges for Electricity).

For internet connectivity, an advisory has been issued by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of India to all the States and UTs to enter into an MoU/ Agreement with BSNL and provide FTTH Internet connection to all the Government Schools which have computing devices. States/ UTs have been advised that the Internet Charges can be met from the following:

- For ICT Labs / Smart Class rooms sanctioned under Samagra Shiksha, internet charges can be met from the recurring charges being released under Samagra Shiksha.
- For Schools in which Smart Classroom are not sanctioned under Samagra Shiksha and which have computing devices, internet Charges can be met from the Management monitoring Evaluation and Research (MMER) funds being released under Samagra Shiksha or can be met from any other State/UT Government funds.

The state governments have been advised to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of students and teachers for providing them with the digital access required for teaching learning digitally.

The National Education Policy 2020 calls for investment in digital infrastructure, online teaching platforms and tools, virtual labs, digital repositories, online assessments, technology and pedagogy for online teaching-learning etc., for which various initiatives have been taken. For school education, digital literacy programs to students, teachers and all stakeholders have been extended with necessary funding mechanisms under Samagra Shiksha for all States/UTs, in alignment with NEP 2020.

The key challenges or limitation faced in implementing digital interventions such as Smart Class are of Capacity Building of teachers, Infrastructure setup, Uninterrupted internet connectivity etc.

A comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA was initiated as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan on 17th May, 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.

The PM eVidya initiative are available to all the students across all the states free of cost. The key components of PM eVidya includes DIKSHA for providing quality e-content, 200 PM e-VIDYA DTH TV Channels for school education in States/UTs, extensive use of Radio, Community Radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani, etc.
