

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2311
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 07.08.2026

**NATIONAL DIGITAL SKILL MISSION FOR TRIBAL
AND RURAL YOUTH**

2311. # SMT. LAXMI VERMA:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government plans to launch a 'National Digital Skill Mission' for the youth of tribal and rural areas such as Bastar, Sarguja, Kanker and Jashpur in Chhattisgarh;
- (b) whether Government is formulating any roadmap to provide free training in subjects like drone operation, data analytics and cybersecurity in these areas;
- (c) whether Government will collaborate with the Chhattisgarh Government to train 1 lakh youth annually through initiatives like 'AI Gurukul Program'; and
- (d) the efforts being made by the Government to develop AI-based solutions for marketing local handicrafts and forest products in rural areas?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (d): India is known for its strong talent pipeline and skilled workforce, with its IT sector globally recognised for high-quality talent. As per global assessments such as the Stanford AI Index, India ranks among the leading nations in AI adoption, preparedness and ecosystem vibrancy. India also accounts for around 20% of the global semiconductor design workforce, reflecting its emphasis on skilling and talent development. With the rapid adoption of digital technologies across sectors, developing a digitally skilled workforce has become critical for sustaining this growth.

The Government accords priority to digital skilling and capacity building of youth across the country, including those from tribal and rural areas in Chhattisgarh. Towards this objective, various Ministries and Departments are implementing flagship programmes to promote digital literacy, employability and skills in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security, Data Analytics, Drone Technology and Semiconductor Design.

As part of the same strategy, the Government of India launched the Digital India Programme in July, 2015. The overall goal is to ensure skilling/training in Information Technology and other emerging domains so that digital technologies improve the life of every citizen, expand India's digital economy and create investment and employment opportunities in India. Key initiatives benefitting the youth of the tribal and rural areas of the country are as under:

1. **National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT):**
 - NIELIT conducts education, skilling and digital competency programmes in Information, Electronics and Communications Technology (IECT), including drone operation, data analytics and Cyber Security, through Degree/Diploma programmes and skill-based long-term and short-term courses.
 - NIELIT delivers training across the country through 56 own centres and 9,000+ partner institutes, including rural and backward areas.
 - In Chhattisgarh, NIELIT has 250+ partner institutes, including 05 in Bastar, 07 in Sarguja, 07 in Kanker and 11 in Jashpur, for delivering training to remote and underserved areas.
 - Training is provided free of cost to candidates belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) / Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities by NIELIT through its centres under the MeitY SC/ST Fee Reimbursement Scheme.
 - NIELIT also implemented an Internship Training Programme under Samagra Shiksha on Robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking and Drone Technology covering around 148 Government schools in Chhattisgarh.
2. **Employability Enhancement & Livelihood Training Program [EELTP] of SC/ST & EWS (Women) Youth through Capacity Building and Skill Development in IECT:**
 - MeitY is implementing the project with an objective of Capacity building/ Skill development of SC/ST & Economically Weaker Section (EWS) Women youth in IT and Electronics Sectors for enhancing their employability and livelihood.
 - The programme is being implemented in 100 most SC/ST populous districts across the States/ UTs, which include Bastar, Bilaspur, Durg and Raipur from the State of Chhattisgarh.
 - The Programme envisages training 52,300 SC/ST and EWS Women candidates in selected futuristic and upskilling 11 National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) -aligned courses.
3. **“Establishment of Intelligent Educational Infrastructure (SMART) in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)”**
 - To promote quality education through digital technology in rural and tribal areas, MeitY, in association with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, implemented the SMART (Establishment of Intelligent Educational Infrastructure in Eklavya Model Residential Schools) project.
 - The project covered 290 EMRSs across the country, establishing 2,320 Digital Smart Classrooms equipped with Digital Interactive Boards and internet connectivity.
 - In the State of Chhattisgarh, 34 EMRSs benefited under the project, including 08 EMRSs located in the districts of Bastar, Jashpur, Surguja and Kanker.
 - The initiative significantly strengthened digital teaching and learning infrastructure, particularly benefiting students from Tribal communities.
 - The project concluded in March 2026.
4. **Establishment of Advanced Digital Infrastructure in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs):**
 - To bridge gender and socio-economic disparities in education, the Government of India established Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), which provide residential schooling for girls from Classes VI–XII.
 - To enhance the learning and teaching experience in these KGBVs, MeitY is implementing the project for Establishment of Advanced Integrated Digital

Infrastructure along with training and skill development programmes in 750 KGBVs across 13 States.

- Out of the 750 beneficiary KGBVs under the project, 40 KGBVs are located in the State of Chhattisgarh.

5. PM-Vishwakarma Scheme:

- PM Vishwakarma provides end-to-end support to traditional artisans and craftspeople, including skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, credit support, incentives for digital transactions and marketing support.
 - Under the scheme, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) has initiated comprehensive marketing support measures to enhance market access for Vishwakarma artisans through online platforms and physical exhibitions.
 - It includes onboarding of PM Vishwakarmas on Government e-Marketplace (GeM), Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and reputed e-commerce platforms.
 - 30,000+ beneficiaries have been onboarded on GeM, over 1,700 artisans have been onboarded on ONDC and 160 artisans have been onboarded on e-commerce platforms.
 - PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries are facilitated to participate in trade fairs and State-level exhibitions for showcasing and selling their handicrafts. As on date, 82 trade fairs and 37 State-level PM Vishwakarma exhibitions have been organised across the country.
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- So far 24 Lakh + beneficiaries have successfully completed Basic Skill Upgradation Training, including 82000+ beneficiaries from the State of Chhattisgarh.

6. TribeX Platform:

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched TribeX, a digital learning platform dedicated to tribal arts, culture, traditional knowledge and Skill development.
- The platform offers free certificate courses and UGC-recognized postgraduate diploma programmes in tribal languages, art forms, crafts and traditional knowledge.
- It also serves as a digital repository for documenting, preserving and promoting tribal languages, oral traditions, performing arts, cultural practices and indigenous knowledge systems.

7. Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)

- C-DAC is implementing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) -enabled capacity-building programmes for rural and tribal artisans and weavers.
- C-DAC Kolkata has developed digital platforms, e-commerce solutions and AI-enabled technology solutions for market intelligence, product cataloguing, demand forecasting and market linkages to promote handicrafts, handloom and other rural products.

8. Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) is one of the world's largest digital literacy initiatives with over 6.39 Crore persons trained in the rural areas of the country (against the target of 6 Crore). This includes 56 lakh+ beneficiaries belonging to ST communities.

In addition, the Government also works with State Governments, including the Government of Chhattisgarh, through various National programmes for digital skilling and capacity building. Major initiatives are under:

1. NIELIT Digital University (NDU) Platform:

- NDU Platform delivers online and blended skill-based courses in emerging technology areas such as AI, Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing, & other domains.
- Through this platform, a learner can have access anytime-anywhere to National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) aligned courses, thereby helping students particularly in rural and tribal areas of the country.
- This platform also features built-in virtual labs for real-time experimentation.
- So far, 2.77 lakh+ candidates have registered under the NIELIT Digital University Platform.

2. FutureSkills PRIME programme is a collaborative initiative of Government of India and National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM). It provides skilling, reskilling, and upskilling in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Internet of Things (IoTs), Cyber Security, Blockchain, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR) etc.

- Under the programme, so far, more than 34 lakh candidates have registered on the portal, out of which there have been 23 lakh+ candidates enrolled/trained in various courses with more than 85% from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- Accessible online at <https://futureskillsprime.in/>
- In the State of Chhattisgarh, 11,000+ candidates are enrolled/trained, this includes 200+ candidates of tribal and rural areas such as Bastar, Sarguja, Kanker, and Jashpur.
- NASSCOM has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with 16 State Governments including Chhattisgarh for adoption of FutureSkills PRIME courses into academic curricula under the provisions of the National Credit Framework (NCrF).
- FutureSkills PRIME has also onboarded the “YUVA AI for ALL” Course from IndiaAI Mission for adoption across academia, industry, general citizens etc. So far, more than 3 lakh+ candidates are enrolled/trained in the course, including 4,500+ candidates from Chhattisgarh.

3. Capacity Building for Human Resource Development in Unmanned Aircraft Systems:

- MeitY is implementing the “SwaYaan – Capacity Building for Human Resource Development in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drone and Related Technology)” project to strengthen human resource development through education, training and research in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).
- It is being implemented through a hub-and-spoke model involving a network of 30 premier institutions.
- The programme is accessible online at <https://swayaan.meity.gov.in/>.
- So far, 51,000+ beneficiaries, including 1,150+ candidates from Chhattisgarh, have been trained.

4. Namu Drone Didi Scheme:

- The Government approved a Central Sector Scheme ‘Namo Drone Didi’ in 2023 to provide 15,000 drones to the selected Women Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- 1000+ drones have been distributed to the Drone Didis of the selected SHGs, including 15 SHGs from the State of Chhattisgarh.

5. Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA):

MeitY is implementing a project on ‘Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)’ for generating human resources in Information Security and creating general awareness on various aspects of Cyber Hygiene & Cyber Security among the masses. Key highlights of the project are given below:

- So far, 6,650 awareness workshops have been conducted across the country covering 11.37 lakh+ participants, including school/college students, teachers, law enforcement, government personnel and the General Public.
- This includes 45 awareness workshops conducted in the State of Chhattisgarh covering 3,600+ participants.
- Further, multilingual awareness material in the form of handbooks, short videos, posters, brochures, cartoon stories for children etc. published and disseminated through print, electronic, social media and www.isea.gov.in & <https://staysafeonline.in/>.

6. India AI Mission:

The Government of India approved the IndiaAI Mission for the development of the overall AI ecosystem in the country, which aligns with India's development goals through the seven pillars.

- Under the FutureSkills pillar of the India AI Mission, IndiaAI Data and AI Labs are being established to create AI-ready talent by providing hands-on training in Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and related emerging technologies, particularly in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.
- The primary objective of these Data and AI Labs is capacity building and skill development. Accordingly, the labs are focusing on training and certification activities.
- It has been envisaged to establish a wider network of 570 IndiaAI Data and AI Labs across the country, comprising 27 NIELIT Centres and 543 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)/Polytechnics. This includes 04 institutions from the State of Chhattisgarh.
