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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 145
ANSWERED ON 25/11/2024

Implementation of Digital Infrastructure in Schools in Rural Areas under NEP 2020

145 Dr. Bhola Singh:

 Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken steps to ensure implementation of digital infrastructure in schools across rural areas in the country under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020;

(b) if so, the details of digital resources or devices provided to schools in underprivileged areas as part of NEP;

(c) the budget allocated and utilized in this regard; and

(d) the measures being taken by the Government to monitor and assess the effectiveness of digital learning programs?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (d):   Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under domain of respective State and UT Governments. Samagra Shiksha, an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII, is running in the country including the rural areas. The vision of the scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education in accordance with the National Education Policy 2020.

 Under Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to States/UTs including rural areas inter-alia for various ICT and Digital initiatives for setting up of ICT labs and smart classrooms in the schools. The non- recurring/recurring grant under 'ICT and Digital Initiatives' is available to the States and UTs for following two options:

 (i) **Option I**: Under this option schools which have not availed the ICT facility earlier can either opt for ICT or smart classrooms as per their requirement and

need. In case of more than 700 enrolment, an additional ICT lab can also be considered. States/UTs have flexibility to procure hardware such as tablets/ laptops/notebooks/ integrated teaching learning devices and open source operating system as well as Hardware, Software, training and resource support. This would include support for digital boards, smart classrooms, virtual classrooms and DTH channels on pro-rata basis for number of schools approved.

(ii) **Option II**: Under this option schools which have already availed the ICT facility earlier can avail smart classrooms/tablets as per the norms of the scheme.

Financial Provisions:

- **ICT Lab:** a non-recurring grant of up to Rs. 6.40 lakh per school and recurring grant of upto Rs. 2.40 lakh per school per annum for a period of 5 years.

  From 2023-24, the scheme also offers step-wise funding based on school enrolment. (Strength < 100 : Rs. 2.5 Lakhs, Strength between 100 – 250 : Rs. 4.5 Lakhs, Strength between 250 – 700 : Rs. 6.4 Lakhs)

- **Smart Classrooms:** The non-recurring grant for Smart Class rooms (2 smart classrooms per school) is of Rs. 2.40 lakh and the recurring grant is Rs. 38,000/- (including E Content and Digital Resources, Charges for Electricity.

  The details of funds allocated and utilized for ICT Labs and Smart Classrooms for the year 2023-24 is given below: -

(Rs. in Lakh)

ICT Labs		Smart Classrooms	
Fund Approved	Fund Utilized	Fund Approved	Fund Utilized
55904.4	78672.62	53729.71	36947.14

*Expenditure includes spillover

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.

To achieve the objectives of NEP 2020, a comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA is in place which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education, with a target to benefit nearly 25 crore school going children across the country. The key components of this initiative are DIKSHA - the nation's digital infrastructure, 200 PM e-VIDYA DTH TV Channels to provide supplementary education in various Indian languages for classes 1-12, ePathshala initiative to disseminate Digital Books and eContents, eJaadui Pitara is a digital app to supplement and a complement to the physical Jaadui Pitara, a vertical on Virtual Labs created on DIKSHA platform where 280 Virtual Labs for Science and Mathematics for subjects Class 6th to 12th have been made available.

The above digital initiatives of Department of School Education & Literacy especially "ICT and Smart Classroom component" provide basic infrastructure to the students and transform the classroom into tech-driven class. The students increase engagement with multimedia content and interactive activities, while availing wider range of resources. This fosters deeper understanding, collaboration, and digital literacy for students, enriching their overall educational experience.

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