

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 385

ANSWERED ON 02/02/2026

Effect of Digital Divide on Students in Rural and Remote Areas of Assam

385. Md. Rakibul Hussain:
Shri Amarsing Tisso:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of internet connectivity in schools of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao district in the State of Assam along with the implementation status of digital education initiatives in these hilly districts;
- (b) whether the digital divide has also adversely affected students from rural, tea garden, minority and economically weaker sections in Assam during online education and if so, the details of the number of students who lacked access to digital devices and internet connectivity;
- (c) whether special provisions exist for providing digital devices to students from economically weaker sections of above State and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has assessed learning gaps caused by digital exclusion, if so, the details of the steps taken to provide devices, connectivity or offline learning support; and
- (e) the details of the measures taken by the Government to bridge the digital divide affecting tribal students in remote areas of the said State including students from rural, tea garden, minority and economically weaker sections?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) announced on 29.07.2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. The Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG-4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems. Education is part of the Concurrent List of the Constitution and most of the Government schools are under the administration of the State Government and its bodies. The Ministry of Education implements ICT and Digital initiatives under Samagra Shiksha and digital learning in Government schools across the country, including rural areas. The initiatives aim to enhance the quality of education by integrating technology into teaching and learning processes. Under the initiatives, funds are provided for setting up ICT Labs and Smart Classrooms according to the requirements of the State submitted in the Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B). The ICT scheme offers two options:

1. Option I: Schools without prior ICT facilities can choose ICT labs or smart classrooms. Schools with over 700 students may get an additional ICT lab. States/UTs can procure

hardware, software, tablets, laptops, and training resources, supporting digital boards, virtual classrooms, and DTH channels.

2. Option II: Schools with existing ICT facilities can access smart classrooms or tablets under the scheme norms.

A comprehensive initiative called PM eVidya was initiated as part of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan’ on 17th May, 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education across the country under the aegis of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. States/Union Territories (UTs) collaborate with NCERT to utilise, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives as per their requirements in mother tongue/local/regional languages. PM eVidya includes 200 DTH TV Channels allotted to States/UTs/Autonomous Bodies (ABs)/Other Ministries in Government of India and 400 Radio channels, including PM eVidya PM mobile app, to enable them to provide supplementary education as per their requirement in various Indian languages for classes 1-12. The State of Assam has been allotted 5 channels (DD PM eVIDYA 58 to 62), disseminating 3,300+ video contents equaling 670+ hours.

Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) is the Nation’s One Nation, One Digital platform for providing quality e-content for school education in States/UTs along with QR coded Energised Textbooks (ETBs) for all grades. Assam as a tenant in DIKSHA, has 3.49 lakh registered users, 7.82 crore learning sessions and 74.69 crore learning minutes. Additionally, Assam hosts 472 digital textbooks and 11,000+ e-content. The total number of course enrolments from Assam stands at 16.62 lakhs, with 13.23 lakh completions till 22nd January 2026. DIKSHA Offline supports areas with limited or no internet connectivity. The stakeholders have access to more than 450+ Virtual Labs and 100 Virtual skill labs (50 each in Hindi and English) on DIKSHA.

In Assam, digital education facilities, devices and infrastructure have been provided across the State in a phased and inclusive manner, covering rural, urban, tea garden and minority areas without any discrimination. At present, out of 10,783 Upper Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools, 10,099 schools are covered under various digital initiatives. In Karbi Anglong district, out of 266 Upper Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary schools, 243 schools are provided with internet connectivity, 181 schools are saturated with Smart Classrooms and all 10 Secondary and Senior Secondary schools are saturated with Computer Labs. In Dima Hasao district, out of 188 Upper Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary schools, 91 schools have internet connectivity, 71 schools are saturated with Smart Classrooms and all 5 Secondary and Senior Secondary schools are saturated with Computer Labs.

To assess performance, the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 (formerly National Achievement Survey) was undertaken by the National Assessment Centre-PARAKH, NCERT under the aegis of the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education to understand the baseline performance in development of competencies among the students at the end of the Foundational, Preparatory, and Middle stages (Grades 3, 6, and 9 respectively) of schooling.

Insights from the Sarvekshan with regards to the State of Assam may be accessed at <https://dashboard.parakh.ncert.gov.in/en/dashboard/IND18?tab=foundation>.

The Government of India, in the Budget 2025, has announced provision of broadband connectivity to all Government Secondary schools in rural areas, under the ‘BharatNet’ project to enhance digital infrastructure in remote areas by BSNL in a phased manner.

Based on feasibility, BSNL has identified 415 schools that are less than 500m from Optical Line Terminal (OLT) which are eligible in Phase-1 for high-speed internet connectivity in the State of Assam.
