

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4976

ANSWERED ON 23/03/2026

Disparity in Digital Education due to Limited Internet Connectivity in Himachal Pradesh

†4976. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap:

Will the Minister of Education be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the benefits of digital education are not reaching the students equitably due to limited availability of internet connectivity, power supply and digital devices in the hilly and remote areas of Himachal Pradesh, especially in the Shimla Lok Sabha Constituency, thereby increasing the educational disparity between urban and rural students, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the number of Government and Government aided schools equipped with internet, smart classrooms and digital teaching materials in the said State;
- (c) the quantum of funds sanctioned, released and utilized for Digital Education during the last five years, year-wise;
- (d) the number of students provided digital devices and the number of teachers benefited from digital training; and
- (e) the time-bound action plan proposed by the Government to bridge the digital disparity?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): 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 to enhance digital learning in Government schools across the country, including the State of Himachal Pradesh.

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

Annual grants are provided to States/UTs to meet electricity and internet expenses. Further, to strengthen internet connectivity, the State of Himachal Pradesh has signed an MoU with BSNL facilitating FTTH connections in government secondary schools located in rural areas.

The State has established ICT Labs and Smart Classrooms in all the secondary schools across the State. The State has also provided ICT Labs in 538 schools and Smart Classrooms in 115 Schools at elementary level. A total of 8,910 and 10,995 Government and Government-aided schools are equipped with internet and smart classrooms/digital teaching materials, respectively.

The details of schools with internet connectivity, electricity and digital devices are as under:

Particulars	Shimla Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency			Himachal Pradesh		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Total Schools	4,060	164	4,224	13,928	469	14,397

Particulars	Shimla Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency			Himachal Pradesh		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
No. of schools having internet connectivity	2,375	115	2,490	8,599	311	8,910
No. of schools having Electricity	3995	164	4159	13783	468	14,251
No. of schools having Digital Devices including Smart Classrooms	3065	148	3213	10570	425	10,995

The total fund outlay and central share approved (in lakhs) for Digital Education (ICT Component) during the last five years are given below:

FY	Total Outlay	Central Share
2021-22	10,165.60	9,149.04
2022-23	16,351.33	14,716.2
2023-24	14,565.54	13,108.99
2024-25	3,722.54	3,350.286
2025-26 (as on 18/03/2026)	7,920.86	7,128.774

Under Samagra Shiksha Central Government releases funds to States / UTs in four instalments and funds are released to the States/UTs based on the pace of expenditure, receipt of commensurate state share, audited accounts, statement on outstanding advances, up-to date expenditure statement, audited utilization certificate of previous year and furnishing of requisite information as prescribed by Ministry of Finance and the Manual on Financial Management & Procurement of the scheme. The allocation of central share to States/UTs under Samagra Shiksha are made as per the Budget Provision, intervention-wise releases are not made. States/UTs further release the funds as per requirements based upon the approvals under PAB of Samagra Shiksha. The total expenditure incurred (including spillover) for Digital Education (ICT Component) during the last five years in Financial Year 2021-22 to 2025-26 (as on 18/03/2026) is Rs 24,832.71 lakhs.

To facilitate the online learning by all students, 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. Under the PM eVidya 200 DTH TV Channels initiative, the State of Himachal Pradesh has created 3,714 contents that are telecasted through their allotted five dedicated channels (HP PM eVIDYA 88 - 92)

Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) is the Nation's One Nation, One Digital platform for providing quality digital teaching material for school education in States/UTs along with QR coded Energised Textbooks (ETBs) for all grades. As a participant in DIKSHA, Himachal Pradesh has 4.58 Crore+ learning sessions, 38.13 Crore+ learning minutes, 245 Digital Textbooks, and 3,542 e-contents. The stakeholders have access to more than 614 Virtual Labs and 100 Virtual skill labs (50 each in Hindi and English) on DIKSHA. To ensure uninterrupted use of digital equipment, offline content has also been supplied to schools so that they can continue digital education even during non-availability of internet. This has helped in expanding coverage and ensuring that both urban and rural schools benefit from modern digital infrastructure.

The Ministry of Education is implementing a National Mission to improve learning outcomes through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement). In the State of Himachal Pradesh, 31,999 teachers have been trained to use Computers as an aid in teaching.
