

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1191

ANSWERED ON 27/07/2026

Expansion of Digital Learning, Research and Creative Technology Initiatives

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Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated operational guidelines for utilising the new budget of Rs. 100 crore for enhancing digital platforms, if so, the details thereof along with the targets fixed to strengthen digital infrastructure in Government and secondary schools in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the criteria for the selection of researchers, sanctioned research chairs, selected institutions and beneficiaries under PM Research Chair scheme, supported by an allocation of Rs. 200 crore, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the number of secondary schools in the country that have established AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics) Content Creator Labs in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies, Mumbai, along with the selection criteria for these schools, State-wise;
- (d) whether the Government has revised the funding criteria under the Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education (MERITE) scheme to accelerate and strengthen digital infrastructure, if so, the details thereof, including the projects sanctioned

and funds released to Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh along with the number of technical institutions in Chhattisgarh covered under the scheme;

(e) the measures taken by the Government to effectively extend the benefits of digital education platforms to students and teachers in rural, remote and tribal areas, like Aravalli and Sabarkantha districts of Gujarat and in other aspirational districts of the State particularly in areas with limited internet connectivity;

(f) whether the Government proposes to establish AI-enabled digital learning facilities, AVGC Labs and research infrastructure in Maharashtra, particularly in Jalgaon Lok Sabha Constituency; and

(g) the details of technical and higher educational institutions in Andhra Pradesh supported for digital infrastructure and multidisciplinary education and research along with the steps taken to expand such initiatives in the State?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a): The Ministry of Education handles the enhancement of digital education and infrastructure through its flagship centrally sponsored scheme, Samagra Shiksha, rather than a standalone allocation of ₹100 crore. The centrally managed funding and programmatic execution for establishing ICT (Information and Communication Technology) labs and smart classrooms follow operational guidelines as outlined in “Samagra Shiksha – Framework for Implementation” (<https://www.dsel-education.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/09/bab5af8d0e4cb47c3727b6450d0217a7.pdf>).

(b): The Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme aims to support researchers and professionals of Indian origin having experience outside of India, in 3 categories namely Young Research Fellows (upto 5 years of post-Ph.D. experience required), Senior Fellows (post Ph.D. experience from 5 to 10 years required) and Research Chairs (post Ph.D. experience of more than 10 years), in 13 thematic areas of engineering, science and technology. Details of the scheme (including eligibility criteria and list of eligible institutions) are available at the PMRC portal <https://pmrc.education.gov.in/about>.

(c): The Government of India announced the establishment of AVGC Content Creator Labs in 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), Mumbai, under the Union Budget 2026–27 to equip students with industry-relevant skills in animation, visual effects, gaming and comics.

(d): The Government has launched MERITE (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education) scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 4,200 crore to improve the quality, equity and governance in 275 Technical institutions. All States/UTs including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh are part of this scheme.

(e): The Ministry of Education implements ICT and Digital initiatives such as PM eVidya and DIKSHA under Samagra Shiksha to enhance digital learning in Government schools across the country including the rural, remote and tribal areas, like Aravalli and Sabarkantha districts of Gujarat. The initiatives aim to enhance the quality of education by integrating technology into teaching and learning processes. Under the scheme, funds are provided for setting up ICT

Labs and Smart Classrooms according to the requirement of the State submitted in the Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B).

A comprehensive initiative called PM eVidya 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 across the country. States/UTs collaborate with NCERT to utilise, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives as per their requirements. The key components of PM eVidya are also aligned towards enhancing digital literacy and include 200 DTH TV channels and 400 Radio channels to enable all States/UTs to provide supplementary education in various Indian languages for classes 1-12. Under the PM eVidya 200 DTH TV Channels initiative, the State of Gujarat (GJ PM eVidya 78-82) has been allotted five dedicated channels.

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 by BSNL to enhance digital infrastructure in remote areas in a phased manner including 1,416 Government Rural Secondary schools in Gujarat.

Ministry of Education launched a large-scale holistic program, NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement), to enhance the professional competencies of teachers and school leaders in India, to improve the overall quality of school education. It is implemented across States/UTs including Gujarat through face-to-face, online and blended training modes on the DIKSHA platform.

(f): In the State of Maharashtra, under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), a total of 144 projects, with an approved amount of Rs. 1431.31 crore, have been approved under various components of the Scheme. This includes 61 projects approved under the third phase of the scheme viz. PM USHA covering the components of Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU), Grants to Strengthen Universities (GSU), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (GSC), and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives (GIEI), amounting to Rs. 814.24 crore. Furthermore, 5 projects worth Rs. 52 crore have been approved in the district of Jalgaon including 2 projects worth Rs. 25 crore Under PM-USHA.

(g): Education being in the Concurrent List, enhancing the quality of education is the responsibility of both the Central and State Governments. However, recognising the need for central assistance, the Central Government has implemented various centrally sponsored schemes including Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) for supporting the State Governments. The government has launched the third phase of the RUSA in June 2023 in the form of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), with an outlay of Rs. 12,926.10 crore, including the committed liabilities of the earlier phases of RUSA, for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26, to cater to the needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas. The scheme has been further extended till 31st March, 2028 for completion of PM-USHA projects and for additional 6 months (i.e., 30th September, 2026) for completion of ongoing RUSA projects. The scheme envisages improvement in access, equity and excellence in State Higher Education system through support under various components viz., Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU), Grants to Strengthen Universities (GSU), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (GSC), New Model Degree Colleges (NMDC) and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives (GIEI).

Under PM–USHA, a total of 33 units have been approved support in the State of Andhra Pradesh for a total approved amount of Rs. 378.74 crore including funding support of Rs. 100 crore to Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visva Vidyalayam, Tirupathi under the MERU component.

Under MERU component, the Universities in respective States/ UTs are expected to undertake various mandatory activities such as (i) implementation of National Credit Framework (NCrF) and Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and implementation of elective course system; (ii) adoption of Academic Bank of Credits; etc. towards achieving higher levels of access, equity and excellence and promoting holistic and multi-disciplinary education.
