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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1144
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29TH JULY, 2021
Digital divide in education

1144 Shri Derek O' Brien:

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is cognizant of a prevalent digital divide in online learning in education between urban and rural areas;

(b) if so, the steps taken to ensure that each child has access to education via digital modes at a personal level and the cost which has been incurred on the project; and

(c) if not, steps Government has in mind to address this gap?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a)   The Government has taken several steps to continue education despite closure of educational institutions in large parts of India and have been unable to conduct physical classes due to COVID-19 lockdown. In these circumstances efforts have been made to continue teaching-learning process in the form of online as well as offline mode.

A comprehensive initiative called **PM eVIDYA** has been 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. The initiative includes:

- DIKSHA (one nation, one digital platform) is the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades are available on it.
- One earmarked Swayam Prabha TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (one class, one channel).
- Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani.

- Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.

(b) and (c)   Keeping in view the availability of digital infrastructure PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education have been issued. The guidelines brief on various modes of digital education including online mode that depends more on availability of internet, partially online mode that utilizes the blended approach of digital technology and other offline activities, and offline mode that utilizes television and radio as a major medium of instruction of education. The guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf

The state governments have been directed to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of all students for providing them with the digital access required for learning digitally. Depending on the states' requirement the Ministry of Education provides Rs.6.40 Lakh for setting up computer labs and Rs.2.40 Lakh for smart classroom.

****