

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 67

TO BE ANSWERED ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2022

Digital divide and learning gaps due to school closure

67 Shri Sujeet Kumar:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware that only 24 per cent households have access to the internet and only 61.8 per cent households own a smartphone and 40 per cent of students had not accessed any remote learning as stated by UNICEF, if so, the reaction of Government thereto;
- (b) Whether the Government is aware that rural students were 10 per cent less likely to have accessed remote learning than their urban peers; and
- (c) the details of the Government's action plan to address the glaring digital divide and learning gaps due to school closure?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SMT ANNAPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (c) To facilitate the online learning by all students a comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan on [17th May, 2020](#), which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multimode access to education. The initiative includes:

- DIKSHA the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades (one nation, one digital platform).
- 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.

The innovative methods adopted by the States and UTs have been detailed in INDIA REPORT DIGITAL EDUCATION 2021. This report is available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/irde_21.pdf

The Department has issued several guidelines to facilitate continuous education to all students during the pandemic:

- NCERT has developed an Alternative Academic Calendar for all the stages of school education. In this calendar the themes/topics have been selected from syllabus and are linked with the learning outcomes. Guidelines have been developed for conducting interesting activities based on these learning outcomes. This is available at following link: <https://ncert.nic.in/alternative-academic-calendar.php>
- Guidelines for Parent Participation in Home-based Learning during school closure and beyond were also issued. The guidelines on home based learning emphasize on the need for parents to create a safe and engaging environment and a positive learning environment. The guidelines are available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/MoE_Home_Learning_Guidelines.pdf
- Guidelines For Children of Migrant Labourers have been issued which focuses on providing admission to the in-migrant children in the nearby government schools without the requirement of submitting any document except an identity card. The guidelines are available at: https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Migrant%20labour%20guideline.pdf
- Also, guidelines for Out of School Children and Mitigation of Loss of Learning have been issued to ensure that children have access to education with quality and equity and to minimize the impact of the pandemic on school education in the country, these guidelines lay down the steps to be taken by the States and UTs. The guidelines are available at: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/guidelines_oosc.pdf
- Learning Enhancement Guidelines for Continuous Learning have been issued, they focus on students without digital devices, students with limited accessibility to digital devices and students with digital devices. The guidelines are available at: https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Learning_%20Enhancement_Guidelines.pdf
