

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5192  
ANSWERED ON 03.04.2023

**National Digital University**

5192. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (RAJUBHAIYA):  
SHRIMATI APARAJITA SARANGI:  
SHRIMATI NAVNEET RAVI RANA:  
MS. LOCKET CHATTERJEE:  
SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK:  
SHRI DEVJI M. PATEL:  
SHRI AJAY KUMAR MANDAL:  
SHRI RANJEETSINGH NAIK NIMBALKAR:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the objectives of the National Digital University and the number of students that are likely to be benefited therefrom across the country along with the funds allocated and spent for the said University;
- (b) whether the Government has taken note that internet is still not accessible to the marginalised people in the country;
- (c) if so, the details of policy formulated by the Government to make higher education accessible to more and more such people;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to provide free digital devices to pursue an online education to the vulnerable communities in the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the efforts made/being made by the Government to deal with the problems of the students like lack of digital literacy and their limited access to digital instruments?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
(DR. SUBHAS SARKAR)**

- (a) The Government of India, in its Budget Announcement 2022-23, has announced establishment of Digital University. It will provide access to students across the country for world-class quality universal education with personalised learning experience at their doorsteps. The salient feature of the Digital University is a networked hub-spoke model, with the hub building cutting edge ICT expertise by partnering with various top institutions such as IIT-Madras, Delhi University, IIT-Delhi,

IIT-Kharagpur, etc. Multiple stakeholder consultations with experts and representatives drawn from private & Government in the domain of education, technology etc, statutory regulatory bodies such as University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), etc. are being organized to finalize the key recommendation for operationalizing the Digital University in 2023.

NMEICT Phase III Scheme approved on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2022 till 2025-26, is being leveraged to implement the Hub & Spoke model for Digital University. The annual allocation for 2022-23 for NMEICT was Rs 400 Crore and the expenditure till date is Rs. 395 Crore.

(b) & (c) To make education accessible to all students including marginalized segments, numerous initiatives are being undertaken. To ensure the reach of educational contents to all including the marginalised people, various initiatives such as Multi-lingual content, accessible Learning Management System, linking peer learners to create strong learning communities and synchronised, experiential learning by blending multi-modal education through SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHA TV CHANNELS etc. has been planned. To provide internet accessibility to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 1 Gbps NKN (National Knowledge Network) connectivity is being provided to large number of HEIs.

(d) to (f) The National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, inter alia states that digital literacy is imperatives for curriculum and highlights the need to make available educational software in all major Indian languages to make it accessible to a wide range of users including students in remote areas. Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools, colleges and universities are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. The State Governments have been advised to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of students and teachers for providing them with the digital access required for teaching learning digitally. As part of ICT and Digital Initiatives component of Samagra Shiksha, ICT Labs and Smart Class rooms are sanctioned in the Government Schools having classes VI to XII. Under the centrally sponsored scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), inter alia, funds are provided under the components of infrastructure grants to universities/ colleges which can be utilised by beneficiary institutions for various activities including improving their ICT facilities.

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