

DIGITAL INCLUSION IN HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF TARUNER SWAPNO SCHEME IN WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

The Taruner Swapno Scheme, introduced by the Government of West Bengal, provides financial assistance to higher secondary students to purchase digital devices such as tablets, smartphones, and personal computers. The primary objective of this scheme is to connect students with the process of digitalisation in education. The rapid expansion of digital education has emphasised the importance of technological access among school students. However, unequal access to digital devices continues to create a significant digital divide, particularly in developing regions. Taruner Swapno is recognised as an important educational reform initiative of the West Bengal Government. The scheme aims to facilitate students' integration of technology into their learning process by providing them with essential digital tools required to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven educational environment.

Keywords: Digital learning, Tablet-based learning, Higher Secondary Education, Educational Technology, Government Initiative

1. INTRODUCTION

The Taruner Swapno Scheme was launched by the Government of West Bengal to provide financial assistance to students of Classes XI and XII. Under this initiative, the government provides a one-time financial support of ₹10,000 to enable students to purchase digital devices such as tablets, smartphones, or personal computers. The scheme was introduced in 2022 with a focus on developing the knowledge, skills, and digital competence of higher secondary students. This initiative represents an important step toward integrating technology into school education and transforming the traditional teaching-learning process into a digitalised education system. With access to digital devices, students are no longer solely dependent on classroom instruction; instead, they can access educational resources, data, and information from various online platforms, thereby supporting independent learning and knowledge acquisition. According to official reports available through the WB Pay portal, it was announced in 2026 that approximately six lakh students benefited from the implementation of the Taruner Swapno Scheme.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyse the educational significance of the Taruner Swapno Scheme in West Bengal. The research follows a qualitative approach based on secondary data sources, including government reports, policy documents, the WB Pay portal, and relevant academic literature. Document analysis was employed as the primary research tool to examine the objectives, implementation, and potential impact of the scheme. The collected information was analysed using descriptive analysis to interpret its role in promoting digital inclusion among higher secondary students.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

The year-wise distribution of students benefited is presented in Table 1

Year	Students Benefited (in lakh)
2022	5.5
2023	6.0
2024	6.0+

2025	6.0
2026	6.0

(Source -WBpay portal, Govt. of West Bengal)

Table 2: Year-wise beneficiaries under the Taruner Swapno Scheme

Year	Beneficiaries (in lakh)
2022	5.5
2023	6.0
2024	6.0+
2025	6.0
2026	6.0

(Source: WBPAY Portal; School Education Department, Government of West Bengal) 2022

Table 3. Estimated Male vs Female Beneficiaries (Year-wise)

Year	Gender	Beneficiaries (in lakh)
2022	Male	2.6
	Female	2.4
2023	Male	2.8
	Female	2.7
2024	Male	3.0
	Female	3.0
2025	Male	3.0
	Female	3.0
2026	Male	3.0
	Female	3.0

(Source -WBpay portal, school education department report)

The distribution data demonstrate that the Taruner Swapno Scheme has maintained a stable beneficiary base of approximately five to six lakh students annually. The provision of one-time financial assistance of ₹10,000 per student indicates a significant governmental investment in promoting digital inclusion. This consistent distribution suggests the scheme's sustained role in supporting access to digital devices among higher secondary students.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY OF TARUN SWAPNO SCHEME

Promotion of Digital Inclusion

The scheme plays a significant role in promoting digital inclusion by providing students with access to digital devices. This enables learners to participate in digital education and reduces inequalities in access to technology.

Enhancement of Learning Opportunities

Access to digital devices allows students to use online educational resources, recorded lectures, and interactive learning platforms, thereby expanding learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom.

Enrichment of Digitalisation

The scheme was primarily launched to promote students' inclusion in the process of digitalisation. By providing access to digital devices, students become familiar with digital technologies and are able to participate more effectively in technology-enabled learning environments.

Creation of Career Opportunities

Access to digital devices enables students to explore diverse educational resources, career information, and skill-development platforms. This exposure supports informed career choices and enhances students' opportunities in an increasingly digital job market.

Development of Creative Outlook

Digital learning environments provide students with access to varied multimedia resources, interactive content, and innovative learning tools. Such exposure encourages critical thinking and helps students develop a creative outlook across different academic and real-life contexts.

Strengthening Academic Interaction and Collaboration

The use of smartphones and tablets facilitates communication between students and teachers and supports peer collaboration through group activities and online platforms. This strengthens academic interaction and promotes collaborative learning, making digitalisation highly beneficial in the educational process.

5. OBSTACLES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TARUN SWAPNO SCHEME

Lack of Digital Skills

A significant challenge in the implementation of the scheme is the limited level of digital literacy among many students. Insufficient knowledge about the effective educational use of digital devices can reduce the academic benefits of the initiative and act as a barrier to its successful implementation.

Infrastructure Issues

Many schools face infrastructural limitations that affect the integration of digital devices into teaching and learning. Problems such as inadequate internet connectivity, lack of technical support, and insufficient availability of trained teachers hinder effective implementation.

Misuse of Digital Devices

Another challenge is the potential misuse of devices for non-academic purposes, including entertainment and excessive gaming. Such usage may distract students from educational activities and reduce the intended learning outcomes of the scheme.

Socio-economic Inequality

Although the scheme reduces the gap in device ownership, variations in home learning environments, parental support, and the affordability of internet services continue to influence students' ability to fully utilise digital resources.

Lack of Teacher Training

Effective digital integration requires adequately trained teachers. In many cases, insufficient professional development in educational technology limits teachers' ability to guide students in using digital devices for academic purposes.

6. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study suggest that the Taruner Swapno Scheme has played a significant role in promoting digital inclusion among higher secondary students in West Bengal. By providing financial assistance for the purchase of digital devices, the scheme has reduced barriers to technological access and enabled students to participate in online and blended learning environments. The availability of tablets, smartphones, or personal computers has expanded access to educational resources, digital platforms, and career-related information, thereby supporting independent and self-directed learning. However, the effectiveness of the scheme is influenced by several contextual factors. Internet connectivity issues, particularly in rural areas, limit the full utilisation of digital devices. Additionally, variations in digital literacy among students and teachers affect the integration of technology into the teaching-learning process. While device access enhances opportunities, it does not automatically guarantee improved academic outcomes. Proper monitoring, teacher training, and infrastructural support are essential to maximise the educational benefits of the initiative. Overall, the scheme represents an important step toward the digital transformation of school education, but its long-term impact depends on sustained policy support, infrastructure development, and responsible usage practices.

7. CONCLUSION

Education development schemes play a significant role in improving access, equity, and quality of learning, especially among rural and disadvantaged students in India. Government initiatives such as Samagra Shiksha, Digital India, and PM eVIDYA have expanded educational opportunities by providing digital resources, infrastructure support, and inclusive learning environments. These schemes have benefited both male and female students by reducing gender disparities, improving enrolment rates, and enhancing digital literacy. Year-wise data indicate a gradual increase in beneficiaries, showing the positive impact of policy implementation and technological integration in education. However, challenges such as the digital divide, inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, and socio-economic barriers still affect the effective implementation of these schemes, particularly in rural areas. Overall, education schemes contribute significantly to strengthening the education system and supporting equitable learning opportunities. For sustainable success, continuous monitoring, infrastructure development, teacher capacity building, and responsible use of technology are essential. This will

ensure that educational benefits reach every learner and help create a more inclusive, innovative, and student-centred education system.

8. REFERENCES

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