

ShikshaNext Introduces 11 EdTech and AI Solutions, Shaping the Market for Better Learning Outcomes in India

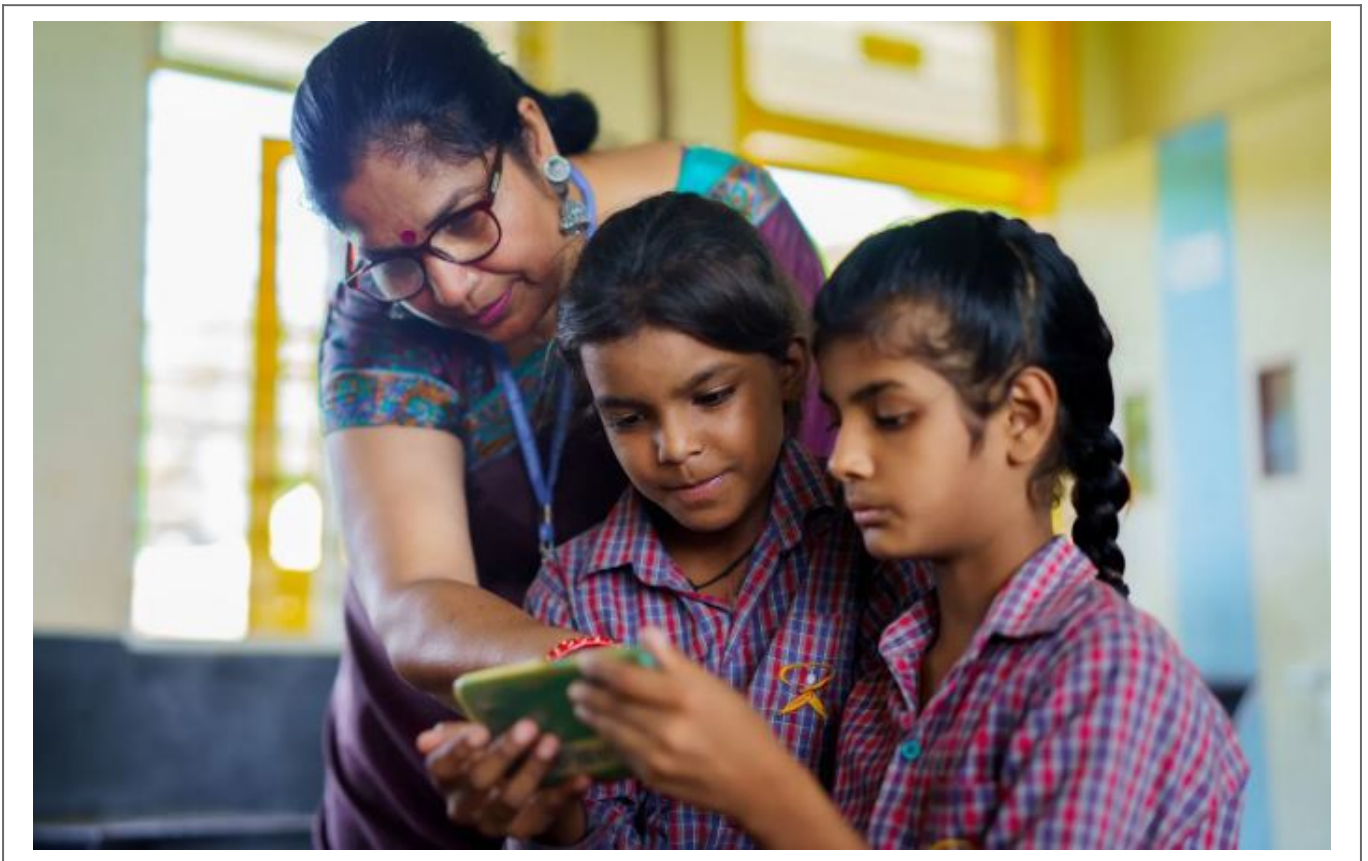
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- The INR 170-Cr Shiksha Next EdTech and AI initiative brings together EdTech supply, evidence, and government demand under one roof, a model not previously attempted at this scale in Indian education
- 11 EdTech and AI solutions, serving children in the 4-10 age group have now been selected across two of ShikshaNext's pillars i.e. EdTech ScaleX and the EdTech Accelerator

ShikshaNext, the 3-year, INR 170-crore multi-donor initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes for children across India by leveraging EdTech and AI, today announced the next phase of its journey with the selection of 11 solutions across its EdTech ScaleX and EdTech Accelerator pillars.



A teacher demonstrates an EdTech app to her students, part of ShikshaNext's market-shaping push to bring proven digital tools into Indian classrooms

The announcement moves the ShikshaNext initiative from vision to execution, aiming to bring evidence-backed and emerging EdTech and AI solutions closer to classrooms and state government systems by 2029. ShikshaNext is anchored by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Reliance Foundation, and Gates Foundation as Founding Strategic Partners, with Central

Square Foundation as the Managing Partner. The Initiative is also supported by Anthropic as a Supporting Partner.

This Initiative further brings together three interconnected pillars, each addressing a different stage of the EdTech innovation pipeline: EdTech ScaleX focuses on improving learning outcomes at scale by taking proven solutions into government systems and enabling their effective adoption; the EdTech Accelerator strengthens the pipeline of promising solutions as they are being built, tested and refined; and the EdTech and AI Innovation Hub tackles some of the unsolved problem statements that could shape the next generation of technology and AI-led education solutions.

Underpinning these three pillars is a sustained commitment to rigorous evidence generation: this involves not just building proof that a solution works, but also understanding how it performs in real government systems, what makes implementation effective for students, parents and teachers, and what it takes to translate promising solutions into sustained impact at scale.

Five solutions have been selected under EdTech ScaleX, serving children in the 4-10 age group:

- 1. Chimple by Sutara Learning:** Teacher-directed, at-home gamified mobile learning solution; validated by a randomised controlled trial (RCT) by Prof. Kartini Shastry, Wellesley College and Prof. Sheetal Sekhri, University of Virginia (2024)
- 2. Rocket Learning:** Playful, WhatsApp-based home-learning; validated by a J-PAL RCT (2023)

3. **Top Parent by Nudged:** Pan-India, parent-facing solution for at-home learning; validated by a quasi-experimental study under the guidance of Prof. Tarun Jain, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (2026)
4. **Prakashak by ThinkZone:** WhatsApp-based at-home learning programme validated by a quasi-experimental study under the guidance of Prof. Tarun Jain, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (2026)
5. **Youth Impact:** Phone-based remedial Math learning; validated by a five-country RCT by Dr Noam Angrist et al. (2025)

Through its portfolio of five solutions, EdTech ScaleX will aim to improve learning outcomes at scale by targeting 8 million+ students.

Six solutions have been selected under the EdTech Accelerator, serving children in the 4-10 age group:

1. **Darsel:** 1:1 personalised WhatsApp chatbot for math practice at-home
2. **Eedi:** AI native WhatsApp based socratic personal tutor for math remediation at-home
3. **TARA ORF by Prosical Language Technologies:** Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessment, analysis, and student remediation at-home
4. **PadhAI by Pratham Education Foundation:** Offline ORF assessment, analysis, and student remediation at-home
5. **Vowels of the People Association (VOPA):** ORF assessment, analysis and student remediation for both literacy and numeracy skills at-home

6. VallamAI by Madhi Foundation: AI-powered teacher-support tool for assessments, coaching, and lesson planning

Through the EdTech Accelerator, these six solutions will work on building the evidence and capabilities needed to translate promising innovations into solutions that can ultimately scale.

Together, these 11 solutions will forge a new pathway for EdTech and AI-enabled learning in India, strengthening learning outcomes for millions of children and building the evidence that turns bold ideas into lasting impact at scale.

Ishmeet Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Central Square Foundation, said, *"Selecting these 11 solutions is where ShikshaNext's ambition starts to become tangible. Five of them are already backed by independent evidence and are ready to work with governments at scale; the other six are building the next generation of AI-enabled solutions for India's classrooms. Bringing proven, scale-ready solutions together with emerging AI innovations and generating the evidence needed to move both forward is what makes this more than a portfolio of grants. It is a pathway designed to help early stage innovations to travel to institutional state adoption and integration into the governance mechanism."*

Prachi Jain Windlass, Head of India, The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, said, *"Technology matters when it helps children learn better and opens pathways to future opportunity. Used effectively, technology and data can help educators understand student progress and act quickly when additional support is needed. ShikshaNext brings evidence, innovation, and*

government adoption together so proven EdTech can benefit more children, while the next generation of AI-enabled solutions is tested and strengthened responsibly.”

B Srinivasan, Executive Lead, Reliance Foundation said, “Reliance Foundation’s vision is simple yet profound that every child in India should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and realise their dreams. The rapid expansion of digital connectivity and 5G over the past decade has unlocked unprecedented possibilities to deliver quality education to every corner of our country.

We have seen that when philanthropy, government, educators, and innovators come together with shared purpose, technology in education moves beyond promising pilots to achieving measurable learning outcomes at scale. ShikshaNext represents the next step in this journey – a collaborative platform to generate rigorous evidence, strengthen partnerships, and harness the power of AI responsibly and inclusively.

Our commitment is to ensure that the next generation of AI-enabled solutions is not only innovative, but equitable – designed to serve every child, everywhere, and to truly transform India’s educational future.”

Benjamin Piper, Director, Global Education, Gates Foundation, said, “The EdTech Accelerator solutions in particular reflect where we think the real opportunity with generative AI lies – not replacing good pedagogy, but strengthening it, in tools built specifically for low-resource classrooms. Pairing that work with ScaleX’s evidence-backed solutions gives ShikshaNext

a pipeline that spans from what we know works today to what could work tomorrow.”

About ShikshaNext

ShikshaNext is a three-year, Rs 170-crore multi-donor initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes for children across India by leveraging EdTech and AI. Anchored by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Reliance Foundation, and the Gates Foundation as Founding Strategic Partners, supported by Anthropic as Supporting Partner and led by Central Square Foundation as Managing Partner, ShikshaNext aims to enable more than 13 million children to access meaningful, technology- and AI-enabled learning opportunities by 2029. The initiative operates across three pillars – EdTech ScaleX, the EdTech Accelerator, and the EdTech & AI Innovation Hub – underpinned by a sustained commitment to evidence generation.

About Central Square Foundation

Founded in 2012, Central Square Foundation (CSF) is a non-profit committed to improving learning outcomes for school-going children across 14 Indian states through system-led reform. CSF works in close partnership with 11 state governments to design and deliver statewide missions on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), while strengthening Early Childhood Education. CSF also focuses on building a vibrant EdTech and AI ecosystem to enable equitable, high-quality learning at scale.

More at www.centralsquarefoundation.org

About The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation builds pathways that change lives for people and communities around the world. Through their philanthropy, Michael and Susan Dell have committed more than €10 billion to improve education, health, and economic mobility, with a focus on delivering measurable, long-term impact. These efforts reflect a belief that lasting change comes from investing in people – and in the potential of every child.

For more information, visit www.dell.org and follow the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation on [LinkedIn](#).

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Mrs Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation works across rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal, and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 88 million people across India.

More at www.reliancefoundation.org

About Gates Foundation

The Gates Foundation is a global philanthropy working to reduce poverty, tackle preventable disease, and expand

opportunity so more people can lead healthy, productive lives. Education is a core pillar of its work, with a Global Education Program focused on improving foundational reading and math for children in India and sub-Saharan Africa.

More at www.gatesfoundation.org

