

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MeitY)
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 819
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 22.12.2017

**EDUCATING RURAL PEOPLE TO OBTAIN E-SERVICES THROUGH
SMARTPHONES**

819. SHRIMATI SASIKALA PUSHPA:

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of provisioning of internet connectivity in rural areas which constitute 68.86 per cent of the total population of the country, including the State of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) whether Government has initiated special drive to educate rural people in order to obtain e-services by using smartphones on their own instead of obtaining services from entrepreneurs; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM)

(a) to (c): Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data as on 30.9.2017 indicates that there were a total of 129.41 million internet subscribers in rural areas of the country which included 8.57 million internet users in rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

Government has initiated several measures to educate rural people in digital literacy / e-services using digital devices including smartphones, these include the following:

(i) Two Schemes entitled “National Digital Literacy Mission” (NDLM) and “Digital Saksharta Abhiyan” (DISHA) were implemented with a target to train 52.50 lakh candidates in digital literacy across the country including rural India. Under these two schemes, a total of 53.67 lakh beneficiaries were trained, out of which around 42% candidates were from rural India.

(ii) ‘Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres(CSCs)’ under the Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) was initiated in November 2016 for conducting awareness sessions on digital finance options available for rural citizens as well as enabling various mechanisms of digital financial services such as Unstructured Supplementary Service Data(USSD), Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Cards/Point of Sales(PoS), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System(AEPS) and eWallet etc. Under this programme, more than 2 crore beneficiaries and more than 27 lakh Merchants were trained/enabled. In addition, sensitization drives were carried out at 650 Districts and 5,735 Blocks throughout the country.

(iii) The “Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)” approved in February, 2017 aims at ushering in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31.03.2019. To ensure equitable geographical

reach, each of the 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats would be expected to register an average of 200-300 candidates. Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers/digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones, etc.), send and receive emails, browse internet, access Government Services, search for information, undertake cashless transactions, etc. and hence use IT to actively participate in the process of nation building. Under this Scheme, so far, more than 1 crore candidates have been registered, out of which more than 96.89 lakh candidates have been trained and more than 45.60 lakh have been certified.
