

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2940**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 20.12.2024

**STEPS TO BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

**2940. DR. M. THAMBIDURAI:**

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that digital divide exists between urban and rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details of steps being taken by Government to bridge this divide;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to promote digital literacy and appropriate skills in rural areas of the country; and
- (d) the further measures to be taken by Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (d): Government of India had launched the Digital India programme in 2015 to ensure digital access, digital inclusion, and digital empowerment. Accordingly, several steps have been taken for bridging the digital divide which range from providing meaningful connectivity to citizen to providing necessary digital infrastructure and digital literacy to the citizens. Over 94 crore citizens are connected through internet. Some of the key initiatives taken by Government are as follows:

- (i) During the years 2014 to 2016, Government of India had implemented two Schemes on providing digital literacy to the masses namely “National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)” and “Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA)” with a cumulative target of 52.50 lakh persons (one person from every eligible household) 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) Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) Scheme was initiated to reach digital literacy in 6 crore rural households (one person per household) nationwide. As against 6 crore, 6.39 crore individuals were trained across the country. The scheme was implemented during the year 2017 to 2024. This scheme has ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2024.
- (iii) In order to outreach the Digital Literacy, the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), has developed e-content of IT Literacy courses in regional languages and made them available online.
- (iv) Common Services Centres (CSCs) are offering government and business services in digital mode in rural areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). Over 800 services are being delivered through CSCs, including government services, financial services and services related to Aadhaar, various social welfare schemes, education, tele-medicine, travel bookings, utility payments. As on October, 2024, 5.84 lakh CSCs are functional across the country(rural + urban), out of which 4.63 lakh CSCs are functional at the Gram Panchayat (rural) level.
- (v) BharatNet project, one of the biggest rural telecom projects of the world, is being implemented by Department of Telecommunications, in a phased manner to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Villages with broadband. As of Oct-2024; 2,14,283 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country.
- (vi) In addition, citizens across the country, have also been enabled to access e-services under various initiatives, such as Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG), My scheme, DigiLocker, e-Hospital and MyGov, etc.

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