

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *188
ANSWERED ON TUESDAY, 10 MARCH, 2026/PHALGUNA 19, 1947 (SAKA)

PROMOTION OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL TOOLS

*188. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has undertaken initiatives to promote the adoption of digital financial tools such as mobile banking, digital lending platforms, online investment services, and budgeting applications among underserved populations, and if so, the details thereof.
- (b) Whether any specific schemes or partnerships have been launched to enhance digital financial literacy, particularly in rural and semi urban areas, and the outcomes reported so far.
- (c) Whether the Ministry has identified challenges related to cybersecurity, data privacy, and digital exclusion in the use of digital financial tools, and if so, the measures being taken to address these challenges.

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) TO (c) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 188 FOR MARCH 10, 2026, REGARDING “PROMOTION OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL TOOLS” TABLED BY SHRI SUJEET KUMAR, HON’BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

(a). The Government, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) have been taking up various initiatives to promote adoption of digital financial tools. These inter alia, include incentive scheme for promotion of low-value UPI transactions (P2M), setting up Digital Banking Units (DBUs) and Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) to support deployment of digital payment infrastructure (such as POS Terminals and QR codes) in underserved regions, etc.

To promote user friendly digital payments, especially in tier - III and below cities and rural areas, NPCI has launched Hello UPI – a conversational payment solution and UPI 123 for feature phone users. NPCI has also launched credit line on UPI which offers small ticket pre-approved loan to UPI users. To further streamline the credit delivery process under the credit guarantee schemes, the government has launched Jan Samarth portal in June 2022. Since its launch, 15 credit linked central government schemes catering to diverse sectors such as agriculture, MSME, SHGs, etc are made available on the portal.

(b). Several initiatives have been taken to enhance financial and digital literacy across rural and semi-urban areas. These, inter alia, include:

- i. The Centre for Financial Literacy (CFL) project has been initiated by RBI since 2017 with an objective to adopt community-led innovative and participatory approaches to financial literacy. A total of 2,421 CFLs have been set up across the country, as on March 31, 2025, with one CFL covering three blocks;
- ii. Banks conduct camps through their Financial Literacy Centres (FLCs) on "Going Digital" through UPI and *99# (USSD) for general public and tailored camps for different target groups;
- iii. Rural branches of banks are required to conduct one camp per month as part of the Financial Awareness Messages (FAME) booklet, which covers basic banking, digital financial literacy, consumer protection etc;
- iv. Financial Literacy Week (FLW) has been conducted every year since 2016 to propagate the message of financial education among citizens across the country;
- v. RBI’s multi-media and multilingual public awareness campaign, titled "RBI Kehta Hai" promotes financial literacy to create awareness among citizens on safe banking practices.
- vi. A special four-month saturation campaign (from 01st July, 2025 to 31st Oct, 2025) covering all the Gram Panchayats of the country was launched by the government to enhance further penetration of financial inclusion schemes.
- vii. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) runs the “SEBI vs SCAM” Campaign, which generates an ongoing fraud awareness campaign via TV, print, radio, and social media in partnership with Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs). SEBI has also launched the Saaṛthi Mobile App, offering educational resources and investment information to protect investors.

(c). Challenges relating to cybersecurity, data privacy and digital exclusion have been observed with the increasing use of digital financial services. These include higher exposure to cyber threats, frauds involving phishing, impersonation, QR misuse and limited connectivity and awareness in remote areas. To address these risks, the following action has been taken:

- i. RBI has put in place regulatory frameworks such as the Comprehensive Cyber Security Framework (2016), the Master Direction on Digital Payment Security Controls (2021), the Master Direction on Outsourcing of IT Services (2023) and the Master Direction on IT Governance, Risk, Controls and Assurance (2023 and Reserve Bank of India (Digital Lending) Directions, 2025.
- ii. Banks are required to conduct IT infrastructure audit through CERT-In empanelled auditors. Further, CSITE team of RBI conducts onsite and offsite audit of banks IT infrastructure.
- iii. RBI and banks also continue public awareness efforts through SMS, radio messages and media outreach. These steps aim to strengthen cybersecurity, protect consumer data and reduce digital exclusion.
- iv. NPCI has deployed layered security measures, including device binding, multi-factor authentication, encryption controls, transaction limits, cooling-off periods and real-time AI/ML-based fraud monitoring.
- v. In order to facilitate citizens to report cyber fraud, Ministry of Home Affairs has operationalised the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal and the 1930 helpline. The Department of Telecommunications has introduced the Digital Intelligence Platform and the “Chakshu” facility for reporting fraudulent calls.
- vi. The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 provides the statutory framework for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognises the rights of individuals and the need to process such data for lawful purposes.
- vii. RBI has operationalized a directory ‘Digital Lending Apps (DLAs)’ on its website with effect from 01.07.2025, consisting of all DLAs deployed by Regulated Entities (REs) of RBI. The directory aims to aid the customers in verifying the claim of a DLA’s association with a RE.
