

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1502
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 31.07.2026

**DIGITAL INCLUSION OF MARGINALISED AND MINORITY
COMMUNITIES**

1502. SMT. RAJATHI :

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted or commissioned research to identify barriers preventing minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women from effectively accessing digital public services;
- (b) what specific studies have been undertaken or commissioned to understand the gender gap in digital inclusion;
- (c) whether the Ministry has coordinated with the Ministry of Minority Affairs to improve digital literacy and access to digital public infrastructure among minority communities; and
- (d) the measures taken by the Ministry to bridge this digital gap?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): In line with Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to democratise technology and empower citizens, the Government of India had launched the Digital India programme in July, 2015. At its core, the programme promotes three interconnected goals: strengthening digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally, and empowering citizens through digital literacy and employment.

The Government is implementing the Digital India Programme with a whole-of-government approach, involving Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and State/UT Governments. Under the Programme, various digital initiatives, platforms and citizen-centric services are being implemented to facilitate efficient, transparent and accessible delivery of Government services.

These digital services are designed to be inclusive and non-discriminatory and are made available to all citizens.

Affordable data, assisted digital access points, and interoperable public platforms are enabling citizens to access welfare schemes, make digital payments, pursue online education, and participate in governance. Data costs have plummeted from Rs. 269 per GB in 2014 to roughly Rs. 8-10 per GB in 2025-26, making India one of the world's cheapest data markets.

The Government believes in democratising technology. Major initiatives include:

- **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)** is one of the world's largest digital literacy initiatives with over 6.39 Crore persons getting trained nationwide (against the target of 6 Crore). Out of this, 1.17 Crore+ belonging to SC, 56.23 Lakh+ belonging to ST communities and 3.59 Crore women have been trained. This scheme focused on empowering the marginalized sections of the society viz. Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The scheme was concluded on 31.03.2024.
- **Employability Enhancement & Livelihood Training Program [EELTP]:** MeitY is implementing the project titled "Employability Enhancement & Livelihood Training Program [EELTP] of SC/ST& EWS (Women) Youth through Capacity Building and Skill Development in IECT". So far, over 35,000 candidates have been registered and more than 14,000 candidates have been certified under the programme.
- **National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)** provides digital literacy and skill development courses, including ACC and CCC, through 56 Centres and a network of over 9,000 partner institutes across the country. 31.92 Lakh+ candidates have been trained by NIELIT under various categories of programmes during the last three financial years. Out of which 4.38 Lakh+ candidates belong to Scheduled Castes (SC) and 2.23 Lakh+ candidates belong to Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities and 11.88 lakh+ candidates are women.
- **FutureSkills Prime**, a collaborative initiative of the Government of India and NASSCOM, provides skilling, reskilling, and upskilling in emerging technologies. So far, over 34 lakh candidates have registered on the portal, with more than 23 lakh enrolled/trained in various courses.
- **NIELIT Digital University (NDU) Platform:** The platform delivers online and blended skill-based industry-aligned courses in emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity etc. So far 2.75 lakh+ candidates have registered under the NIELIT Digital University Platform.
- **Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA)** is the Nation's One Nation, One Digital platform for providing quality e-content for school education in States/UTs along with QR coded Energised Textbooks (ETBs) for all grades. As a participant in DIKSHA, States/UTs have generated and contributed over 3.67 lakh content in local/regional languages enabling multilingualism. Overall, 579.41 crore learning sessions for 2.29 crore users have been completed on DIKSHA by students, teachers and other stakeholders.
- **Common Services Centres (CSCs)** provide over 800 government and business services digitally, enhancing last-mile service delivery through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). As of May 2026, 5.01 lakh CSCs are functional across the country, including 3.91 lakh at the Gram Panchayat level. As on date, a total of 2.98 Lakh CSCs have been set-up in the Scheduled Caste (SC) / Scheduled Tribe (ST) dominated areas.
- To promote linguistic inclusion in digital services, the Government has launched the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM) – **BHASHINI**, envisaged as a public digital platform for Indian language technologies. The Bhashini platform addresses communication barriers for India's diverse population. This fosters greater access to digital tools for underserved communities.

- **BharatNet** project is implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages beyond GPs on demand basis across the country, including Gram Sabhas with SC/ST majority population. As of June 2026, a total of 2.21 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) has been made service-ready under the BharatNet Project across the country. In addition, citizens across the country have also been enabled to access e-services under various initiatives, such as Digi-Locker, Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG), My scheme, e-sign, national Scholarship portal (NSP), MeriPehchaan/National Single Sign-On (NSSO), e-Sanjeevani, e-Hospital and MyGov, etc.

Assessments and impact studies of Digital initiatives:

- The Government has, from time to time, undertaken assessment and impact studies of e-Governance initiatives under the Digital India Programme through periodic monitoring, stakeholder consultations and independent third-party evaluations.
- In February, 2021 evaluation study was conducted for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) of - Social Inclusion, Law and Order and Justice Delivery by the NITI Aayog. The study evaluated 31 Centrally Sponsored Schemes across five Ministries. These include schemes for Development of Scheduled Castes and Development of Other Vulnerable Groups (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment); Development of Scheduled Tribes (Ministry of Tribal Affairs); Development of Minorities (Ministry of Minority Affairs); Modernization of Police Force and Border Area Development Programme (Ministry of Home Affairs) and Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary (Ministry of Law and Justice). The intent of the evaluation is to capture the broader canvas of effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and scope for value additions to bring innovation and sustainability across these schemes, thereby assessing the overall sectoral impact on the national economy.
- In 2025, a survey-based study titled “Digital India Program: Citizen Feedback & Actionable Insights” was conducted to assess digital adoption and its evolving impact. The study found that 90% of respondents were aware of and had used digital services, particularly Aadhaar, UPI/BHIM, Digilocker, Ration Card services and other digital services. Further, 71% accessed Digital India services at least once a month, of whom 77% reported increased usage over time. Additionally, 88% of respondents expressed pride in India’s Digital Public Infrastructure, such as Aadhaar and UPI, and its growing global recognition.
- MeitY has conducted a study titled ‘Bridging the Gap in Digital Economy: Enabling drivers and constraining factors impeding digital inclusivity’ in 2025 with the support of Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS). The study has analysed the distribution of digital access, usage, and benefits across households in four aspirational districts from four different states (Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam and Rajasthan) with rural and urban presence with a focus on ways in which gender, age and intra-household dynamics shape digital engagement.
- As per the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey (CAMS), 2022–23, 78.4% of persons aged 15–24 years reported the ability to send messages with attached files, indicating improved digital skills among youth. The survey also reported that 94.2% of rural households and 97.1% of urban households possessed a telephone/mobile phone. Further, the following assessment was also undertaken to evaluate the impact of Common Services Centres (CSCs):

An independent impact assessment of the Common Services Centres (CSC) Scheme (CSC 1.0) was carried out by the Centre for Innovations in Public Systems (CIPS), Hyderabad.

It emerged from the assessment study of CSC 1.0 that the CSC initiative holds substantial potential for viability, and long-term sustainability. The CSC scheme is indeed a powerful vehicle not only for the efficient and effective delivery of citizen services but also for promoting entrepreneurship among the rural population and spurring socio-economic developmental activity.

- A mid-term impact assessment of CSC 2.0 was carried out by the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad. The report analysed that CSCs reduced citizens' travel distance by 27.25 km, travel time by 40.43 minutes, waiting time by 69.45 minutes, travel cost by ₹52.12, and wage loss by ₹179.44 per transaction.
- End-Term Impact Assessment was conducted by the Academy of Management Studies (AMS). The assessment reported that 98% of beneficiaries were able to obtain the required services through CSCs, 93% perceived a positive impact on their lives and 95% expressed satisfaction with the services delivered through CSCs.
