

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2746
TO BE ANSWERED ON 3RD JANUARY, 2018**

INTERNET SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

2746. SHRI RAMSINH RATHWA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of households in rural areas which are currently having access to internet services;
- (b) the details of the Government initiatives to increase availability of high speed internet services in rural areas; and
- (c) the measures taken to ensure digital literacy among students and adults in rural areas along with the current status of such efforts?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) As per “The Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators” report published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on 28th December 2017, there are 14.62 internet subscribers per 100 population in rural areas in the Country as on 30th September 2017.

Further, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) had conducted survey on “Social Consumption: Education” during its 71st round (January-June, 2014). Survey results show that 16.1 per cent of households with at least one member of age 14 years and above had access to use internet facility in rural areas. There were 1675.44 lakhs estimated rural households having at least one member of age 14 years and above as per this survey. In the 75th round (July 2017-June 2018) of National Sample Survey, information on whether household has internet facility has been included and survey is underway.

(b) Government has planned the BharatNet project to provide 100 Mbps broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media. Under first phase of the project, 1 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be connected. Under Phase-II, to be completed by March 2019, connectivity will be provided to remaining 1.5 lakh GPs.

In addition to above, Government has allocated 965 Megahertz spectrum through auction in October 2016 to various telecom service providers for access services. Telecom Service Providers are continuously rolling out their networks using this spectrum resulting into the increase in internet connectivity and speed in the country.

(c) The initiatives taken by the Government to promote digital literacy in rural areas throughout the country are as under:

(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 (Age Group: 14 – 60 Years) 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) 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 1.03 crore candidates have been registered, out of which more than 1 (one) crore candidates have been trained and more than 47.69 lakh candidates have been certified under this scheme.
