

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1474**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 19.12.2018

**INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN RURAL AREAS**

**1474. SHRI RAJESHBHAI CHUDASAMA:**

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 percent of the total population of the country, including in State of Gujarat;
- (b) whether Government has initiated special drive to educate rural people in order to obtain e-services by using smart phones 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 S.S. AHLUWALIA)

(a): Provisioning of internet connectivity in rural areas is under the purview of Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under Ministry of Communications. DoT is implementing BharatNet project with the aim to connect all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country and provide 100 Mbps connectivity to all GPs. So far, 3,01,154 Kms of optical fiber has been laid connecting 1,21,652 Gram Panchayats and 1,16,411 Gram Panchayats are service ready. As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) reports, the number of internet connections in rural areas of the country is 19.4 crore and in the state of Gujarat is 1.04 crore.

(b) and (c): Yes, Sir. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is implementing a scheme titled "Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)" to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household). Besides digital literacy, the beneficiaries under the PMGDISHA scheme are also trained on use of electronic payment system covering Unified Payments Interface (including BHIM app), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Point of Sale (PoS), Aadhar enabled payment system (AEPS), Cards, and Internet Banking. As on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, a total of 1.63 crore candidates have been trained under PMGDISHA scheme.

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