

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1528
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 19.12.2018

FACILITIES UNDER DIGITAL INDIA

1528. SHRI NIHAL CHAND:

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

- (a) the effective steps taken by the Government for better augmentation of digital facilities under Digital India in remote areas/villages including those near borders;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to collaborate with private sector in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government proposes to promote information technology infrastructure for digital connection in village panchayats and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA)

(a): The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India has initiated the 'Digital India' programme with the vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Some of the key initiatives taken by the Government for expansion of digital facilities under Digital India programme in remote areas/villages of the country are as follows:

- **Common Services Centre (CSC):** Common Services Centres are internet enabled centres operated by local entrepreneur, called Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) and provide eServices to rural citizens. For this, MeitY has initiated a project namely "Common Services Centre (CSC) 2.0" in August, 2015 under Digital India Programme, which envisages setting up of at least one CSC at Gram Panchayat (GP) to cover all the 2.5 lakh GPs across the country. Over 300 digital services are being offered by these CSCs. Till November, 2018, there are 3.05 Lakh Common Services Centre which are active and delivering eServices in remote areas/villages including those near borders.
- **DigiGaon:** MeitY has also initiated the 'Digital Village Pilot Project' in October, 2018. 700 Gram Panchayats (GPs) with atleast one Gram Panchayat per District per State/UT are being covered under the project. The digital services being offered are Digital Health Services (Tele-Health & Tele-Veterinary consultation), Education Service, Financial Services, Skill Development, Solar panel powered street lights including Government to Citizens Services (G2C), Business to Citizen (B2C) Services.

(b): The Government is already extending these services through private participation. The village level entrepreneurs (VLEs) are private entities under CSC-SPV which runs Common Services Centres.

(c): The steps taken by the Government for providing digital connection in village Panchayats is as follows:

- **BharatNet:** Provisioning of internet connectivity at 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 in the country and to provide 100 Mbps connectivity to all gram panchayats (GPs). So far, 3,01,154 Kms optical fiber has been laid connecting 1,21,652 Gram Panchayats. OFC laying and equipment installation has been completed at 1,16,411 Gram Panchayats, which are service ready.
