GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2383
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 26.12.2018

DIGITAL INDIA FOR RURAL INDIA

2383.   SHRI SIRAJUDDIN AJMAL:

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

(a) the details of Digital India Initiative undertaken by the Government in rural and hilly areas in the country;
(b) the number of internet subscribers in the country separately in rural and hilly areas, State/UT-wise;
(c) the estimated funds required and allocated for the purpose, State/UT-wise; and
(d) the details of challenges faced for effective implementation of Digital India initiative and the measures taken by the Government so far?

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 including rural and hilly areas in 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 rural and hilly areas in the country.
- **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.
- **BharatNet:** 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.

(b)   and (c):   Provisioning of internet connectivity in rural areas is under the purview of Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under Ministry of Communications. An amount of Rs. 42068 crore has been approved by cabinet on 19.07.2017 for BharatNet project. The funds are allocated by USOF for the project as a whole and not State/UT-wise. The funds allocated are Rs. 16286 crore upto 2017-18 and Rs. 6000 crore for 2018-19. The number of internet subscribers State/UT-wise in the country is given in annexure.

(d):   The primary challenges faced for implementation of Digital India programme are digital literacy and digital connectivity. Government has already taken necessary measures to tackle these challenges through

implementing PMGDISHA to usher in digital literacy in rural India with the objective of covering 6 crore rural households and BharatNet project with the aim to connect all 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country with 100 Mbps connectivity.

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<div align="right">**<u>Annexure</u>**</div>

<div align="center">Telecom Service Area-wise, Rural/Urban subscriber-base of Internet as on 30th September, 2018.</div>

Telecom service area	Subscribers (in Millions)	
	Rural	**Urban**
Andhra Pradesh	17.50	26.28
Assam	5.23	5.02
Bihar	18.21	14.52
Delhi	0.76	32.17
Gujarat	10.46	25.45
Haryana	4.88	8.70
Himachal Pradesh	2.78	1.86
Jammu & Kashmir	2.39	3.63
Karnataka	10.63	25.08
Kerala	8.99	13.59
Kolkata	1.17	13.02
Madhya Pradesh	11.53	23.88
Maharashtra	16.80	29.31
Mumbai	1.08	23.25
North East	2.75	3.34
Orisaa	7.66	5.59
Punjab	6.50	14.67
Rajasthan	13.95	18.12
Tamil Nadu	11.57	29.14
UP(East)	18.47	19.71
UP(West)	9.61	18.17
West Bengal	11.16	11.46
Total	**194.07**	**365.95**