

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 282
TO BE ANSWERED ON : 12.12.2018

IT AWARENESS IN RURAL AREAS

282. DR. P. K. BIJU:

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

- (a) the details of the action taken by the Government to increase IT awareness in rural areas of the country;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to increase the internet connectivity in various States including the State of Kerala and if so, the action taken thereon; and
- (c) whether the Government proposes to use IT for helping villagers in the areas of education, training, healthcare, agriculture, etc., and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a): Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India 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 UPI (including BHIM app), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Point of Sale (PoS), Aadhar enabled payment system (AEPS), Cards, and Internet Banking.

As on 10th December, 2018, a total of 1.61 crore candidates have been trained under PMGDISHA scheme, out of which more than 86.54 Lakh candidates have been certified.

(b): 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, to connect all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country, including Kerala, by broadband in a phased manner. As on 02.12.2018, by laying 3,01,154 Km Optical Fibre Cable; a total of 1,21,652 Gram Panchayats(GPs) have been connected by Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) and OFC laying & equipment installation has been completed at 1,16,411 GPs, which are Service Ready.

As part of BharatNet project, the Last Mile connectivity is envisaged through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology for accessing broadband /internet services at the respective GPs in the country, including Kerala. Every GP is being provided with, on an, average 5 Access Points (APs), i.e. 2 APs at Public places & 3 APs at Government Institutions such as school, hospital, post offices, police station, etc. For around 1.07 lakh GPs, the agencies for setting up of Wi-Fi hotspots have been selected. So far, Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed at 39,359 GPs and out of them, services are being provided at 10,775 GPs, catering to more than 11 lakh subscribers with a data usage of over 50 TB per month.

In Kerala, under BharatNet project, as on 02.12.2018, by laying 830 Km Optical Fibre Cable; OFC laying & equipment installation has been completed at 1129 GPs, which are Service Ready.

(c): Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on 31st October 2018 has launched the Digital Village pilot project with a total project outlay of Rs. 98.324 Cr. for implementation in a duration of 3 years. Under this initiative, 700 Gram Panchayats across the country are envisaged to offer Education Services, Digital Health Services – Tele-Health & Tele-Veterinary consultation, Financial Services, Skill Development and Solar panel powered street lights including Government to Citizens Services (G2C), Business to Citizens (B2C) Services.

Various programmes such as e-Hospital, National Agriculture Market (eNAM), Soil Health card, etc. for helping villagers are also being implemented. In addition to these schemes, Common Services Centres (CSCs) deliver a range of services related to social welfare schemes, financial services, education & skill development, healthcare, agriculture and digital literacy in villages.
