GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2411
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 15.03.2023

LACK OF DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGITAL LITERACY

2411. DR. KALANIDHI VEERASWAMY:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of the prevailing lack of digital accessibility and
digital literacy among the citizens despite the Government's robust transformation to
digital governance and digital economy;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to enhance digital
infrastructure to all sections of the population;
(c) the details of the steps taken by the Government to improve digital literacy among the
urban and rural poor separately; and
(d) the details of the fund allocated to enhance digital inclusion, especially in the regions
with less literacy rate and high unemployment rate, State/UT-wise?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a) and (b): Government has launched the Digital India programme with the vision of
transforming India into a digitally empowered society and a knowledge-based economy, by
ensuring digital access, digital inclusion, digital empowerment and bridging the digital
divide. The programme is centred on three key vision areas, namely digital infrastructure as a
core utility to every citizen, governance and services on demand, and digital empowerment of
citizens. The overall goal is to ensure that digital technologies improve the life of every
citizen, expand India's digital economy, and creating investment and employment
opportunities and create digital technological capabilities in India.

Some of the key initiatives taken by the Government to make information technology
accessible to all sections of the population are as follows:

(i) Aadhaar: Aadhaar provides 12 digit biometric and demographic based identity that
is unique, lifelong, online and authenticable. Further to give statutory backing to
Aadhaar 'The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies,
Benefits and Services) Act, 2016' was notified on 26th March 2016. Over 136.4
crore residents have been enrolled.
(ii) Common Services Centres (CSCs): The Common Services Centres are digital
service delivery centres. CSCs are offering government and business services in
rural areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). So far, 5.35 lakh CSCs
are functional, out of which 4.24 lakh CSCs are functional at the Gram Panchayat
level.
(iii) Digital Village Pilot Project: 700 Gram Panchayats/villages with at least one Gram
Panchayat/village per district per State/UT are being covered under the project.
The digital services being offered are Digital Health Services, Education Services,
Financial Services, Skill Development and Solar panel powered street lights.

(iv) e-District Mission Mode Project (MMP):e-District is a Mission Mode Project
(MMP) that aims at electronic delivery of identified high volume citizen centric

services at the district or sub-district level. Presently 4,671 e-services have been launched in 713 districts across India.

(v) Internet Connectivity: India is the largest democratic country with more than 85 crore Internet Subscribers.
BharatNet is being implemented by Department of Telecommunication in a phased manner to connect about 6 lakh inhabited villages including Gram Panchayats (GPs) with broadband facility in the country. As on date, total 1,91,751 GPs have been made Service Ready under the BharatNet project in the country.

(vi) Apart from the above, many other initiatives, such as Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG), DigiLocker, e-Hospital, MyGov and Meri Pehchaan, etc. also enable access to various e-services using information technology.

Further, the status of digital literacy among the citizens and steps taken by the Government to improve the same may be seen at replies to part (c) & (d) of the question.

(c) and (d): To enhance digital adoption, Government is focusing on providing digital literacy to the citizens across the country. The steps taken by the Government to improve digital literacy among the urban and rural areas of the country given below:

i. During the years 2014 to 2016, Government of India had implemented two Schemes on providing digital literacy to the masses namely "National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)" and "Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA)" with a cumulative target of 52.50 lakh persons (one person from every eligible household) across the country. A total fund of Rs. 351. 73 crore was utilized under these schemes.
Under these two schemes, a total of 53.67 lakh beneficiaries were trained, out of which around 42% candidates were from rural India. Both schemes have been closed now.

ii. In the year 2017, Government approved a Scheme titled "Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)" to usher in digital literacy in rural India with a target to cover 6 crore rural households (one person per household) across the country. As of now, an amount of Rs. 1738 Crore has been released for implementation of the Scheme. So far, a total of more than 6.78 crore candidates have been enrolled and 5.82 crore have been trained, out of which 4.33 crore candidates have been duly certified under the Scheme.

The above 3 schemes were/are funded as Central Sector Schemes, hence funds were/are not sanctioned and allocated to States/UTs.

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