

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**LOK SABHA  
STARRED QUESTION NO. 226  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021**

**HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS**

†\*226. SHRI SANJAY JADHAV:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken any measures to expedite the access of high speed internet connectivity in the villages across the country to ensure quality internet connectivity for the students in rural areas attending online classes;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government for qualitative upgradation of internet connectivity in the villages;
- (d) the number of villages in Parbhani district of Maharashtra where broadband internet connectivity is already available along with the number of villages in the district where high speed broadband internet connectivity is yet to be provided; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to provide high speed internet services to students at affordable/ subsidized rates, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, LAW & JUSTICE AND  
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

- (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) to (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 226 FOR 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021 REGARDING “HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS”.**

(a) to (c) High speed internet facility is being provided in rural areas by the Government and the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) through 3G/4G wireless mobile and fixed wireline broadband. To have a comprehensive and objective data about availability of 3G & 4G services in villages, all the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) were directed to collect the data village-wise & furnish to the Department. From the said data, it is estimated that out of 5,97,618 inhabited villages (as per Census 2011) in the country, a total number of 5,58,537 villages have 3G or 4G mobile wireless coverage.

This estimate is further reinforced by the extraordinary four times rise in number of smartphones in India from 16.5 crore in year 2014 to 70 crore in year 2020. It is gathered that good number of these smartphones are also in the hinterland. Similarly, data usage has increased 130 times from 89.4 MB per subscriber per month in year 2014 to 12.1 GB per subscriber per month in year 2020. Government of India is also implementing BharatNet project to provide broadband/high speed internet connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. As on 26.02.2021, a total number of 1,54,096 GPs including Block Head Quarters (BHQs) have been made service ready with broadband infrastructure.

As part of the BharatNet project, the last mile connectivity is being provided through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, including Fibre to the Home (FTTH). In the 1.23 lakh GPs (approx.) of BharatNet Phase-I, the provisioning of Wi-Fi Services in about 1.10 lakh GPs has been assigned to CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (a Special Purpose Vehicle under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology), and in about 10,000 GPs to Government of Rajasthan/Raj COMP Info Services Ltd. (RISL), etc.

So far, by utilising the BharatNet network, Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed at 1,03,400 GPs, and 4,95,078 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided.

(d) In Parbhani district of Maharashtra, out of 830 villages (as per Census 2011), a total of 809 villages have broadband internet connectivity using 3G or 4G mobile wireless coverage. Further, under BharatNet, 307 GPs out of total of 708 GPs have been made service ready and the remaining are under implementation.

(e) As per TRAI's Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators report dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the average per GB wireless data cost is Rs 10.95. However various Service Providers are free to offer special tariff plans for different segments of customers including students.

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