

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3625  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021**

**POOR NETWORK IN HILLY AREAS OF UTTARAKHAND**

†3625. SHRI AJAY BHATT:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the fact that students in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand have become deprived of their studies due to poor network problem during online studies, examination, etc. which has led to heavy resentment in these areas and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto along with the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (b) whether the Government is formulating any plan for online studies/examinations due to corona pandemic in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

(a) 7,873 number of mobile towers and 28,234 number of Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) are providing mobile network coverage in Uttarakhand State. As per data collected from Telecom service providers (TSPs) in 2020, it is estimated that around 15,319 villages out of 15,745 inhabited villages in the State of Uttarakhand have mobile network coverage and 13,335 inhabited villages have 3G/4G mobile internet coverage. Mobile coverage in uncovered villages in the country is being provided by the Government and TSPs in a phased manner. Uttarakhand state has its own geographical difficulties and still there are some areas where internet accessibility may not be available due to which students could not get benefitted by online studies.

Ministry of Education released PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital/Online Education. The guidelines provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward enhanced quality online education. These guidelines are useful for a diverse set of stakeholders including school heads, teachers, parents/teacher-educators and students. Keeping in view the availability of digital infrastructure, these guidelines briefs on various modes of digital education including online mode that depends more on availability of internet, partially online mode that utilizes the blended approach of digital technology and other offline activities, partial and offline mode that utilizes television and radio as a major medium of instruction of education. The guidelines are available at [https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines\\_0.pdf](https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf)

Education is a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and the matter relating to education pertains to Central as well as the State Government concerned. The steps taken by all the states including Uttarakhand are shown in the report “India Report Digital Education, June 2020 and available at

[https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/India\\_Report\\_Digital\\_Education\\_0.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/India_Report_Digital_Education_0.pdf)

Moreover, to improve the internet connectivity in rural areas, CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (CSC-SPV) of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has been assigned the task of providing Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connectivity to the Government Institutions including schools. This project is for providing Internet connection to Government schools in respective Gram Panchayats.

Learning programmes have also been started in the form of offline learning tools in the form of radio, community radio and CBSE podcasts, toll free numbers, missed call, SMS based requests for audio content, localized radio content for edutainment etc. The medium of TV, radio has been used for the students who do not have digital means.

Further, BharatNet project is being implemented by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to the all Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country. Moreover, the proposal of the DoT for proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks under the framework of Prime Minister’s Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) has recently been approved by the Government. The proposal will enable proliferation of Broadband internet through public Wi-Fi hotspots which will facilitate broadband access in the country including rural areas.

**(b) to (d)** The Uttarakhand State in Project Approval Board (PAB) for 2020-21 has been allocated funds for Smart Classrooms in 929 schools with an outlay of Rs 2740.60 lakh.

Education is a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and the matter relating to education pertains to Central as well as the State Government concerned. Accordingly, the state governments have also been directed to act based on the situation prevailing at every place to meet the demands of all students including economically weaker students and tribes especially for providing them with the digital access required for learning digitally.

The steps taken by all the states including Uttarakhand are shown in the report “India Report Digital Education, June 2020 and available at

[https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/India\\_Report\\_Digital\\_Education\\_0.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/India_Report_Digital_Education_0.pdf)

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