

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4686
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24TH MARCH, 2021**

INTERNET AND MOBILE BANDWIDTH IN RURAL AREAS

4686. SHRI SHRINIWAS PATIL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that during the COVID-19 lockdown rural students faced severe problems in online learning mainly due to non-availability of sufficient internet and mobile bandwidth in rural areas and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (b) whether the Government is taking any steps to designate internet services bandwidth as essential service to ensure that both BSNL and private telecom service providers provide sufficient bandwidth and stable internet in rural areas and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) Online classes are being conducted at the schools by employing various digital tools in the form of DIKSHA portal (<https://diksha.gov.in/>), SWAYAM Portal (swayam.gov.in), SWAYAM Prabha, DD Channel, e-Pathshala (<https://epathshala.nic.in/>), NROER (National Repository of Open Educational Resources) portal (<https://nroer.gov.in/welcome>). 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. The steps taken by all the states are shown in this report - India Report Digital Education June 2020

https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/India_Report_Digital_Education_0.pdf

Further, Internet access under BharatNet scheme has been made available to Government institutions and to improve the internet connectivity in rural areas. CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd (CSC-SPV) has been assigned the task of providing Fibre To The Home (FTTH) connectivity to the Government Institutions, including schools in respective Gram Panchayats.

(b) No, Sir. No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.
