

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1499
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28th JULY, 2021**

BHARATNET PROJECT IN ASSAM

1499. SHRI KRIPANATH MALLAH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the salient features of the BharatNet Scheme;
- (b) the details of the funds sanctioned, allocated and utilized under this scheme in Assam so far;
- (c) the details of the number of districts that have been covered under this scheme within Assam so far;
- (d) whether the Government is aware that due to COVID-19 pandemic all school and colleges have been closed and the students are bound to continue their studies through online education during this period and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (e) whether the Government is aware of the fact that districts the Karimganj and Helakandi of Assam are still not covered under the scheme of BharatNet which has impeded the educational pursuit of the students and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (f) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

- (a) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. The infrastructure created under BharatNet project is a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers. The scope of BharatNet has been recently extended upto all inhabited villages beyond GPs. On 30.06.2021, Union Cabinet accorded approval for a revised strategy for implementation of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 16 States (including Assam) of the country covering about 3.61 lakh villages including GPs.
- (b) Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL), the Executing Agency for BharatNet Project under Department of Telecommunications, has so far released funds of Rs. 160.96 crore (approx.) for implementation of the project in Assam.
- (c) In Assam, the GPs of 28 Districts have been taken for implementation under BharatNet Phase-I on Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) media.

(d) As informed by the Department of School Education & Literacy, in order to impart education to students, a multi-pronged approach has been adopted by leveraging technology to reach the students. Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA), Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), PRAGYATA guidelines on digital education, e-textbooks and e-content on National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), Online Virtual Labs (OLABS) for practical's related e-content, activity-based and highly engaging modules for special resources for teachers focusing upon experiential learning and competency-based education, NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers for their Holistic Advancement) online for capacity building programme for Elementary school teachers and school heads etc. are used by schools, to provide learning facilities.

Further, initiatives such as SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha, National Digital Library (NDL), Virtual Lab, e-Yantra, FOSSEE (Free Open-Source Software for Education), ePathshala, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)content; use of Radio, Community radio, and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani, etc. are being taken to ensure quality education to the students. Quality Online courses are provided through SWAYAM which is an indigenously developed MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) platform.

A comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.

The Government of Assam has also taken digital initiatives in this regard such as Biswa Vidya "Radio Programme, Gyan Brikshya, Digi LEP WhatsApp Group, Jio TV Platform for Academic support of the students, uploading of e-learning resource in the Android App. Further, for academic support during the pandemic, a Mentor teacher is assigned to a group of students.

(e) & (f) The GPs of Karimganj and Helakandi Districts have been taken up for implementation in BharatNet Phase-I, and 44 GPs of Karimganj and 52 GPs of Helakandi have been made Service Ready. The remaining inhabited villages including GPs of the Assam (including these two Districts) are planned to be implemented under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model of BharatNet. Further, 907 villages out of 915 villages of Karimganj District have broadband services through 3G/4G technology. In Helakandi District, 315 villages out of 330 villages have broadband services through 3G/4G technology.
