

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2566  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2021**

**INTERNET CONNECTION TO FINANCIALLY BACKWARD FAMILIES**

2566. ADV. A.M. ARIFF:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the State of Kerala is implementing an ambitious project for providing internet connection to thirty lakh financially backward families free of cost and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to emulate the aforesaid project across the country and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government has received any proposal from the State of Kerala for providing financial assistance under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for the said project and if so, the action taken by the Government thereon?

ANSWER

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

(a) As informed by Electronics & IT (B) Department of Government of Kerala, Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) is a State Government project to provide high-speed internet connectivity to 30,000 Government offices and Educational institutions all over the State. Simultaneously, it aims to provide free internet access to around 20 lakh economically backward families and internet services for others at a lower rate.

(b) & (c) A proposal was received from the State of Kerala seeking central assistance for the Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON), to setup overhead Fibre Network to extend fibre connectivity to every home and interconnect all the Government Institutions. The K-FON proposal is beyond the scope of BharatNet which is to provide broadband connectivity to every Gram Panchayat (GP). However, the scope of BharatNet has been recently extended upto all inhabited villages beyond GPs. Union Cabinet has also accorded approval for a revised strategy for implementation of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 16 States (including Kerala) of the country, covering about 3.61 lakh villages including GPs. The Request for Proposal (RFP) has been floated on 20.07.2021 for implementation of PPP model.

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