GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5126
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 02.04.2025

DIGITAL INDIA COMMON SERVICE CENTRE

5126.   SHRI NAVASKANI K:
SHRI C N ANNADURAI:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the number of one model Digital India Common Service Centre (DICSC) to be established in all gram panchayats across all districts of the country;
(b) the budgetary allocation made for this project;
(c) the current reach of Common Service Centre (CSC) across rural and urban areas and the manner in which it aligns with the goals set under the Digital India initiative;
(d) the number of CSCs set up in the State of Tamil Nadu along with the percentage of the centres which are functional;
(e) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure adequate internet connectivity at CSCs in remote and rural areas where network issues are prevalent;
(f) the mechanisms put in place to monitor and improve the quality of services provided by CSCs; and
(g) the other steps taken by the Government to bridge the digital divide in rural India and ensure that digital services reach every citizen?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (e):   Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) approved the Digital India Common Service Centres (DICSC) project with an objective of setting-up 4,740 CSCs at the Gram Panchayat (GPs) level in 10 districts. CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is the implementing agency for the project. These 10 districts are Gandhinagar, Chamba, Puducherry, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad), Mamit, Jodhpur, Khammam, Pilibhit, Gorakhpur and Leh (Ladakh). Total budget outlay of the project is Rs. 31.6 Cr.

Common Services Centre (CSC) project i.e CSC 2.0 is an initiative of Government of India, under the 3rd pillar (Public Internet Access Programme) of Digital India initiative. It aims to expand the CSC network to GPs and access of e-services to the citizen. CSCs are setup and run/operated by the Vilage Level Entrepreneur (VLEs), on a self-sustainable basis. These Centres (CSCs) deliver over 800 services including government services, financial services and services related to Aadhaar, various social welfare schemes, education, telemedicine, travel bookings, utility payments, etc.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited has apprised that in February, 2025, a total of 5,72,664 CSCs are functional across the country, with 4,51,880 CSCs functional at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level. In Tamil Nadu, a total number of 32,180 CSCs are registered, out of which in February 2025, 19,131 CSCs are functional i.e 59.45 % functional CSCs.

CSC operates on an entrepreneurship model and the VLE creates his/her own infrastructure for setting-up of CSCs.

Department of Telecommunications, has taken a number of steps & projects with funding from Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) [erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)], Department of Telecommunications (DOT), for internet connectivity in remote and rural areas. Some of the projects have already been completed and many are under implementation. Details of the major projects are as follows:

i. **BharatNet project** is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages. The infrastructure created under BharatNet project is a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers, and the same can be utilized to provide broadband services, such as Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections, leased lines, dark fibre, backhaul to mobile towers, etc. On 04.08.2023, the Union Cabinet has approved the Amended BharatNet Program (ABP) under Design, Built, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model, for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, creation of network in 42,000 GPs (approx.), Operation and Maintenance for 10 years and utilization. The connectivity to remaining non-GP villages (about 3.8 lakhs) is to be provided on demand basis from their respective GPs. BSNL has been nominated as the Project Management Agency. As of Feb-2025; 2,14,323 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country.

ii. For provision of high-speed internet/data and Mobile Services (including 4G) in remote & rural areas of the country, various targeted schemes/projects have been implemented.

Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region, Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands (Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands), Scheme for providing mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, Schemes for providing mobile services in Aspirational Districts, Scheme for providing mobile services in the border villages and other priority areas, 4G Saturation scheme to provide mobile coverage in all uncovered villages etc. The project for saturation of 4G mobile services for providing 4G mobile services in uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas of the country is also under implementation at a total cost of Rs. 26,316 Cr. Till February 2025, 21, 577 villages/ locations have been covered under above mentioned mobile projects in the country.

iii. **Commissioning of submarine optical fibre cable** in Aug-2020 between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2312 Km) for providing high speed internet/data connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Commissioning of Submarine OFC connectivity between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (1869 km) (Total 11 Islands; Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agatti, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmath) in Jan-2024. Creation of 225Km OFC network in Lakshadweep Islands for provision of FTTH & other services. These optical fibre cable projects have facilitated faster roll out of mobile services (4G/5G) and other high-speed data/internet services in the Islands.

(f): CSC e-Governance Services India Limited has apprised that it continuously monitors service delivery, provided by CSCs, through various mechanisms, as follows:

   i. Performance tracking through dashboards that monitor transactions and service delivery at each CSC.
  ii. A centralized grievance redressal system to address VLEs and citizen complaints.
 iii. Capacity building and training programs for VLEs to enhance the efficiency and skill set of VLEs.
  iv. At grassroot level, regular audits and assessments to ensure operational efficiency.

(g):   The Government is taking various steps to bridge the digital divide, including:

- PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan) to enhance digital literacy among rural citizens.
- CSCs to deliver more G2C/B2C services (such as include banking, telemedicine, digital learning, and financial inclusion) at gram panchayat level.
- BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages. As of Feb 2025, 2,14,323 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country.

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