GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 365
ANSWERED ON 19/08/2025

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL AREAS

*365. Shri Benny Behanan:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken by the Government to improve digital infrastructure in rural areas to facilitate access to Government services;

(b) whether the lack of internet connectivity hampers the implementation of welfare schemes in rural regions; and

(c) the roadmap to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural areas?

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ANSWER
MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN)

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(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *365 TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.08.2025REGARDING "DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL AREAS"

(a) to (c): As informed by the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, for providing high bandwidth capacity internet/broadband connectivity and mobile services to remote & rural villages and islands in the country that currently lack coverage, a number of steps & projects have been taken up by the Department of Telecommunications. The BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages beyond GPs on demand basis across the country. 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, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model, for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, creation of network in balance GPs, Operation and Maintenance for 10 years and utilization. As of June, 2025, 2,14,325 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country.

For provision of high-speed internet/data and Mobile Services in uncovered 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 crore. Till June 2025, 21,748 mobile towers have been commissioned in the country under various Government funded mobile projects.

Various optical fibre cable projects such as commissioning of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2312 Km), commissioning of Submarine OFC connectivity between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (1869 km), creation of 225 Km OFC network in Lakshadweep Islands have facilitated faster roll out of fixed line broadband/internet services, mobile services (4G/5G) and other high-speed data services in the Islands.

The Department of Rural Development with the support of the National Informatics Centre, Centre for Development of Advance Computing and Digital India Corporation has designed, developed and implemented various IT driven solutions for implementation of its flagship schemes. In order to mitigate digital divide and to ensure last mile reach, the digital governance solutions delivering services at Gram Panchayat level are developed with offline capabilities. This ensures that access to these solutions are not limited to internet connected areas but also to remote or non-connected areas.

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