

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1632
ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2025**

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**1632. SHRI PRAVEEN PATEL:
SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the objectives of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF);
- (b) the steps taken to increase broadband penetration in rural India;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to accelerate the installation of mobile towers to address the problem of poor connectivity in tribal and hilly areas in the country;
- (d) the manner in which the USOF has contributed to strengthening digital infrastructure;
- (e) the notable projects/achievements which can be recorded under this fund; and
- (f) the details of beneficiaries in Rajasthan, district-wise?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) As per the Telecommunication Act, 2023 (No.44 of 2023), the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has been renamed as “Digital Bharat Nidhi” (DBN) and following are the objectives to utilise proceeds received by DBN as defined in the act:

- (i) support universal service through promoting access to and delivery of telecommunication services in underserved rural, remote and urban areas;
- (ii) support research and development of telecommunication services, technologies, and products;
- (iii) support pilot projects, consultancy assistance and advisory support towards provision of service under clause (i) of this section;
- (iv) support introduction of telecommunication services, technologies, and products.

(b) to (e) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to Gram Panchayats (GPs), including rural areas, in the country. As of Oct-2025; 2,14,843GPs have been made service ready and 13,66,753 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided under BharatNet project in the country. Further, Amended BharatNet Program (ABP), approved by the Government on 04.08.2023, is under implementation for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, creation of network in balance GPs and on demand basis in remaining non-GP villages from their respective GPs.

To address the problem of poor mobile network connectivity in tribal and hilly areas of the country, a number of targeted mobile towers projects have been taken up by the Government. Under 4G Saturation Scheme and other mobile projects, till Oct-2025, 22,987 mobile towers have been commissioned under various Government funded mobile projects in the country, including tribal and hilly areas.

(f) Beneficiaries in Rajasthan for these telecom facilities are Government Institutions like Gram Panchayats, Anganwadi, Sub Centres/ Primary Health Centres (PHC)/ Community Health Centres (CHC)/Veterinary Hospitals, Police Stations, Agriculture Depots, Post Offices, etc., private individuals & institutions, rural households and others.
