

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2981
ANSWERED ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2025**

UNIVERSAL SERVICES OBLIGATION FUND (USOF)

**2981. SHRI VISHWESHWAR HEGDE KAGERI:
SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN:
SHRI BALABHADRA MAJHI:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of broadband and mobile connectivity expansion funded through the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), including the total number of villages provided with 4G/5G coverage and broadband access during the last three years;
- (b) the details of mobile towers commissioned in rural, remote, tribal and hilly regions through USOF support along with the timelines for completion of ongoing 4G saturation projects, State -wise including Karnataka;
- (c) the details of the steps taken under USOF to accelerate broadband penetration in rural India;
- (d) the measurable outcomes of USOF-funded schemes during the last three years;
- (e) the major USOF-backed projects presently under implementation, their sanctioned cost, physical progress, and expected date of completion;
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to expedite the setting up of mobile towers in tribal and hilly areas of the country to address the problem of poor connectivity; and
- (g) the manner in which USOF helped in improving the digital infrastructure along with the notable projects or achievements attributable to said efforts?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (g) For providing high bandwidth capacity internet/broadband connectivity & mobile services and to accelerate broadband penetration in remote & rural villages and Islands, including tribal and hilly areas in the country, a number of steps & projects have been taken up through Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) [erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)] support by the Government. 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 Gram Panchayats (GPs), including rural areas, in the country. As of Nov-2025; 2,14,904 GPs have been made service ready and 13,92,767 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided under BharatNet project in the country including

6,26,148 FTTH connections during the last three years. 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. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has been nominated as the Project Management Agency and will also have target of providing 1.50 crore FTTH connections to households in next five years.

- ii. Under 4G Saturation Scheme and other Mobile projects, till Nov-2025, 23,280 mobile towers have been commissioned in the country and during the last three years 29,009 villages have been covered with 4G. The expected timeline for completion of ongoing 4G saturation projects is December 2026. The State-wise details of mobile towers commissioned in rural, remote, tribal and hilly regions including Karnataka through DBN support is available on DBN website (<https://usof.gov.in/en/home>).
- iii. Commissioning of Submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2312 Km) and between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (1869 km) for providing high speed internet/ data & other services to the Islands.
- iv. Details of the project cost of major DBN supported projects is as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of Projects	Project Cost (Rs. in crores)
1	BharatNet	188,041
2	4G Saturation Project	30,620
3	Provision of Mobile Services in 7287 Uncovered Villages of Aspirational Districts	2,876
