GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3004
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 11.03.2026

**DIGITAL SKILLING INITIATIVES FOR EXPANSION OF DIGITAL
ACCESS AND EMPLOYABILITY**

3004. SHRI VISHNU DATT SHARMA:

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

(a) whether the Government is implementing Digital India, BharatNet, PM-WANI and MeitY digital-skilling initiatives to expand digital access and employability;
(b) whether BharatNet fibre, last-mile Wi-Fi, Common Service Centres (CSCs) and digital-literacy programmes are operational in the districts of Katni, Panna and town of Khajuraho in the Khajuraho Lok Sabha region and if so, the number of persons trained during the last three years;
(c) the measures taken by the Government to enable farmers, women, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to access digital payments, e-markets, e-governance and tele-services;
(d) if digital inclusion and usage remain low, the key barriers identified and corrective steps planned; and
(e) the strategy to link MeitY skilling, CSC operations and start-up support with local job creation and micro-enterprise opportunities in these districts?

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

(a) to (e): Government of India launched Digital India programme in July 2015. It was launched to further the Prime Minister's vision of democratising technology and ensuring that its benefits reach all sections of society.

Key initiatives under the programme are as follows:

1. Common Services Centres
CSCs offer government and business services in digital mode, thereby enhancing last-mile connectivity in rural areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). Over 800 services are being delivered through CSCs.

As on January, 2026, 5.54 lakh CSCs are functional across the country (in rural and urban areas), out of which 4.32 lakh CSCs are functional at the Gram Panchayat level (rural).

40,954 CSCs are functional in the state of Madhya Pradesh, including 941 CSCs in Katni, 633 CSCs in Panna and 1567 CSCs in Chhatarpur district (includes Khajuraho region).

State/UT wise and district wise details of CSCs are available at https://csc.gov.in/ and list of services is available at https://csc.gov.in/.

2. Digital Skilling: Government has taken several steps for providing digital skills to the youth and runs programs for skilling/upskilling in the latest technologies. The key initiatives are:

(i) PMGDISHA: Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) was launched in 2017 to ensure digital literacy. The scheme was implemented through CSC e-Governance services India limited and The scheme concluded on 31st March 2024.

The Scheme emerged as one of the world's largest digital literacy initiatives with over 6.39 Crore persons getting trained nationwide (against the target of 6 Crore).

In the state of Madhya Pradesh, a total of 56,92,467 candidates from the rural households were enrolled, and 50,69,449 candidates were trained under the Scheme.

This included 92,755 candidates from Katni and 94,679 candidates from Panna and 137205 candidates from Chhatarpur district (includes Khajuraho region).

(ii) **FutureSkills Prime:** It is a collaborative initiative of MeitY and National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) aimed at making India a cutting-edge digital talent nation. Key features are:

- Provides skilling, reskilling, and upskilling in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Internet of Things (IoTs), Cyber Security, Blockchain, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR), etc.
- Courses are developed in the consultation with industry to align with actual employment needs.
- Portal can be accessed online at https://futureskillsprime.in/ to earn skill certificates in line with their aptitude and aspirations.

Under the programme, so far, more than 27.53+ lakh candidates have registered on the portal, out of which there have been 17.24+ lakh candidates enrolled/trained in various courses.

In the state of Madhya Pradesh, a total of more than 50,000 candidates have enrolled/trained in various courses

(iii) **National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)**
NIELIT provides digital literacy courses such as Awareness in Computer Concept (ACC), Course on Computer Concepts (CCC) etc. It has trained 43 lakh+ candidates under various courses, including digital literacy and cyber security awareness.

Training is delivered through a wide network of 56 NIELIT Centres and 9000+ Accredited Training Partners/Facilitation Centres.

NIELIT has more than 350 Facilitation Centres spread across the State of Madhya Pradesh, out of which nearly 15 centres are located in the districts of Katni and Panna for promoting Digital Literacy Courses (DLC).

Between 2020 and 2025, a total of 66,404 candidates applied for Digital Literacy courses in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

In addition, the NIELIT Digital University (NDU) Platform has been launched by Government of India to deliver online and blended skill- based courses in emerging technology areas.

This Platform is designed to offer future-ready, industry- aligned programs in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing, and other frontier domains.

This platform also features built-in virtual labs for real-time experimentation in Semiconductor Design, cybersecurity, Cyber Forensics, Industry 4.0, and other emerging domains.

Through the NDU platform, every learner can have access anytime-anywhere to NSQF-aligned courses. So far more than 55,000 candidates have registered through NDU Platform for various courses.

3. Basic communications/ internet services: Internet access across the country, including rural areas, is provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) through wireless mobile and fixed broadband.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has undertaken several initiatives to enhance connectivity through expansion of mobile networks and optical fibre infrastructure:

(i) **BharatNet:** Broadband connectivity is being provided to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) throughout the country.

The network is utilised through leasing of bandwidth and dark fibre, and provision of public Wi-Fi to provide broadband and internet access at public places.

It also supports Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) connectivity for Government institutions (such as schools, health centres, anganwadis, police stations, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, post offices, ration shops), as well as private institutions and households.

So far, a total of 2,14,921 Gram Panchayats have been made service-ready including 115 GPs in Katni, 390 GPS in Panna and 225 GPs in Chhatarpur district (including Khajuraho region).

(ii) **Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI)** provides a framework allowing Public Data Offices (PDOs) to set up public Wi-Fi hotspots, under the aggregation of Public Data Office Aggregators (PODAs) and Application providers, with minimal regulatory oversight. This framework encourages shopkeepers and small enterprises to participate in digital connectivity and digital transformation.

As on 02.03.2026, the number of PM-WANI Wi-Fi hotspots installed are 76 in Katni, 40 in Panna, and 89 in Chhatarpur.

The Government is also promoting the use of Information Technology to enable farmers, women, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to access digital payments, e-markets, e-governance services, and tele-services across states through various initiatives under the Digital India programme. Key initiatives include the following:

(a) DigiLocker: DigiLocker provides all time access to authentic digital documents from original issuer for the common citizen.

More than 67.17+ crore users are registered with DigiLocker availing its services and more than 967.01+ crore documents have been issued from 2456 issuers onboarded on the platform.

(b) Common Services Centres: CSCs offer government and business services in digital mode, thereby enhancing last-mile connectivity in rural areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). Over 800 services are being delivered through CSCs.
As on January, 2026, 5.54 lakh CSCs are functional across the country (in rural and urban areas), out of which 4.32 lakh CSCs are functional at the Gram Panchayat level (rural).

(c) Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG): It is a mobile application for all government services. More than 2446 services (Central: 872, State:1,574) are offered on the platform.

(d) Unified Payments Interface (UPI): UPI has enabled millions of individuals and small businesses in rural and remote areas to make fast, secure and low-cost digital payments, significantly advancing financial inclusion.

UPI serves 6.5 crore merchants, and connects 685 banks on one platform, making it the world's largest digital payment system. It powers 81% of India's digital payments and nearly 49% of global real-time digital payments.

(e) LokOS application: It has been developed to enable end-to-end digitization of Self-Help Group (SHG) networks across the country.
More than 93 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are registered on the platform including 5.58 lakh Village Organisations (VOs). Over 10.11 crore households mobilised through these Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) have been linked on LokOS.

(f) Poshan Tracker: It is an important tool for women & child development and last mile delivery of nutritional services. It Provides real-time monitoring and tracking of beneficiaries and duty bearers and is Linked with Education and Health Programmes for proactive service delivery.

Nutritional services have been delivered to 8.90 crore beneficiaries, with last-mile service delivery by 13.36 Lakh Anganwadi Workers being digitally tracked to ensure effective implementation and monitoring.

(g) eSanjeevani - National Telemedicine Service of India is a step towards digital health equity to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). eSanjeevani facilitates quick and easy access to doctors and medical specialists from smartphones.

Over 45.43 Crore patients at over 138,300+ Health & Wellness Centers (as spokes) through 18,500+ hubs serviced by more than 230,800+ doctors, medical specialists, super-specialists and health workers as telemedicine practitioners.

(h) **Government e-Marketplace (GeM):** GeM facilitates online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.

Currently, 135,800+ Primary Buyers and 208,400+ Secondary Buyers are onboarded on GeM. 10,700+ product categories and 355 service categories have been listed on GeM.

(i) **National Agriculture Market (eNAM):** e-NAM provides access to markets, real-time price information, facilitates quality assaying of agri-produce and provides infrastructure for cleaning, grading, sorting and packaging.

So far, 1.79 crore farmers are registered on e-NAM platform, including small holder farmers and 1522 mandis are integrated with e-NAM across 23 States & 4 Union Territories.

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