

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

**LOK SABHA  
STARRED QUESTION NO. 329  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2024**

**INTERNET PENETRATION**

**\*329. Dr. Nishikant Dubey:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has employed any strategy to ensure internet accessibility and affordability across the country particularly in rural and remote areas, especially in Jharkhand and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether any initiative is being taken to bridge the digital divide in rural areas and promote internet penetration across the country; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof, particularly in the State of Jharkhand?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN  
REGION  
(SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA)**

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

**STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 329 FOR 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2024 REGARDING “INTERNET PENETRATION.”**

(a) to (c) Internet access is available in the country including rural areas through the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) through wireless mobile and fixed wireline broadband.

Government has taken numerous initiatives to enhance internet connectivity in India through mobile connectivity and optical fiber rollout. As a result, as of October, 2024:

- Number of 4G Base Transceiver Station (BTS) have reached 24,96,644 spread across 783 districts
- India has seen the fastest rollout of 5G services in the world with 4,62,084 BTS deployed across 779 districts
- The cost of data has reduced drastically from Rs 269 per GB (in March 2014) to Rs. 9.08 per GB
- The Median mobile broadband speed has increased from 1.30 Mbps in March 2014 to 95.67 Mbps
- The average wireless usage of data per subscriber has increased to 22.24 GB per subscriber per month

Out of 6,44,131 villages, 6,15,836 number of villages are having 4G mobile connectivity in the country. 31,546 of the total 32,370 villages in Jharkhand have 4G mobile connectivity.

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) (erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)) has the mandate for supporting universal service delivery of telecommunication services in underserved rural, remote and urban areas. Through the various schemes funded by DBN such as BharatNet and 4G saturation projects, rural and remote areas of the country including Jharkhand have been connected by optical fibre and mobile internet. Out of the 4,416 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Jharkhand, 4,390 GPs have been made service ready under BharatNet project through optical fiber connectivity.

Government has also approved the Amended BharatNet Program (ABP) in August 2023. The program provides for internet access by Optical Fibre (OF) connectivity to 2.64 lakh GPs in ring topology and also to provide OF connectivity to the remaining Non-GP villages (approx. 3.8 lakhs) on demand basis.

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