

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3804
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2015
Digital Inclusion
Roy Prof. Saugata

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

- (a) the details of number of Panchayats digitally connected in the country, State-wise;
- (b) whether there is any proposal to introduce digital inclusion in various sectors of life;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the State Governments will have any role in digital inclusion in the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project was planned to connect all Gram Panchayats (approximately 2.5 Lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by bridging the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks for providing broadband connectivity. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps bandwidth was to be provided in all the estimated 2,50,000 GPs for utilization by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis including Internet Service Providers. As on 02.08.2015, OFC laying in 24,156 Gram Panchayats are completed and 2900 Panchayats have been digitally connected. State-wise details of number of Panchayats digitally connected in the country are given in Annexure.

In order to review the strategy and approach towards speedy implementation of National Optical Fibre Network, Government of India constituted a Committee on 14th January, 2015. The Committee submitted its report on 31st March, 2015. The Committee, inter-alia, recommended that the project be renamed as BharatNet to reflect the national aspiration to establish a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to realize the vision of Digital India, in partnership with the States and the private sector.

(b) & (c) Government of India is implementing the 'Digital India' programme with the vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It is an umbrella programme that weaves together a single comprehensive vision for digital inclusion. The vision of Digital India is focused on three key areas, viz. (i) Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, (ii) Governance and services on demand and (iii) Digital empowerment of citizen. Digital India aims at providing the much needed thrust to nine pillars of growth areas viz. (i) Broadband highways, (ii) Universal access to mobile connectivity, (iii) Public internet access programme, (iv) e-Governance – reforming Government through technology, (v) e-Kranti– electronic delivery of services, (vi) Information for all, (vii) Electronics manufacturing – target net zero imports, (viii) Information Technology (IT) for jobs and (ix) Early harvest programmes.

(d) & (e) The State Governments have to play key role as they are responsible for implementing State Sector Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) /e-Governance initiatives, under overall guidance of respective Line Ministries in cases where Central Assistance is required. In order to implement BharatNet, 14 States have conveyed their formal consent and 4 States in-principle consent for adopting the State led model of implementation where project management, implementation and utilization would be led by Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) established by the respective State Government. Annexure
State-wise details of number of Panchayats digitally connected under National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) Project

S. No. State/UT No. of Gram Panchayats
digitally connected

1	Kerala	1129
2	Karnataka	1502
3	Gujarat	41
4	Bihar	47
5	Chhattisgarh	26
6	Haryana	5
7	Madhya Pradesh	8
8	Rajasthan	14
9	Uttar Pradesh	5
10	Uttarakhand	7
11	Chandigarh	12
12	Puducherry	99

13 Telangana 5
Total 2900
