

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2498  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022**

**INTERNET BROADBAND SERVICES**

†2498. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that private companies are reluctant to invest in rural India resulting in very poor broadband penetration in those areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures taken by the Government for the deeper digital outreach in urban and rural areas of the country;
- (d) whether any funds have been earmarked for providing internet broadband services separately in urban and rural areas during the last five years and the current year;
- (e) whether the Government has any plan to increase the penetration of internet in the rural areas of Rajasthan; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) & (b) Internet/broadband facility is being provided in rural areas by the Government and the Licensed Service Providers through wireless mobile and fixed wireline connections. Various Private companies provide internet/broadband services in different areas of the country as per their business strategies and plans. However, there are challenges in provisioning of internet/broadband services in rural & remote areas compared to urban areas which inter-alia include remote & difficult terrains, diversely located areas with scattered population, high capital investment requirements with non-commensurate returns etc.

As per latest “The Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators” reports released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) dated 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, internet subscribers in rural and urban areas of the country are 336.60 million and 497.69 million respectively at the end of September, 2021.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Government for enhancing digital outreach in the country:

- (i) National Broadband Mission was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with a vision to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.
- (ii) In its endeavour to provide high speed internet/broadband connectivity, BharatNet project is envisaged in all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages of the country.
- (iii) To enhance proliferation of internet/broadband services in the country, Prime Minister Wireless Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) framework has been introduced.
- (iv) Various schemes are implemented under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to enhance mobile broadband services in the rural and remote areas of the country including North Eastern Region (NER), areas affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), Border areas, Aspirational Districts and Island Territories.

(d) Licensed Service providers provide broadband services in urban and rural areas of the country as per their business plans. However, for expansion of broadband services in rural and remote areas of the country, there are various Government schemes with the support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under which total fund earmarked/disbursed for last 5 years and current year till February, 2022 is about 31529 Cr.

(e) & (f) In addition to BharatNet project in Rajasthan, the Government has following schemes under USOF for enhancing internet/broadband in the state:

- (i) Provision of mobile connectivity in 354 uncovered villages, Border area & other priority areas of various states including Rajasthan.
- (ii) Provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in four States including Rajasthan.

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