



Digital Inclusion of Rural and Remote Areas

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Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, in a written reply to an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha today, said that for promoting rural digital inclusion, including expansion of broadband and mobile connectivity, last-mile internet access, affordability of services, and digital literacy programmes in rural and remote areas, a number of steps & projects have been taken up by the Government. Some of the projects have already been completed and many are under implementation. Details of the major projects & steps, funded by the Government, are as follows:

- i. BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages in the country. 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 connectivity to remaining non-GP villages on demand basis from their respective GPs. Also, 4G Saturation and other mobile projects are under implementation for providing mobile services in uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas of the country. The State/UT-wise details of GPs connected under BharatNet Project is available on DBN website (<https://usof.gov.in/en/home>).
- ii. Commissioning of submarine optical fibre cable projects between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2312 Km) and between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (1869 km).
- iii. Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) has been implemented under the supervision of Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) in active collaboration with States/UTs to promote digital literacy in rural areas.

Government has released Bharat 6G Vision Document in March 2023 with the objectives to design, develop and deploy 6G network technologies that provide ubiquitous intelligent and secure connectivity for high quality living experience for the world to position India as a global leader in 6G technology by 2030.

The Government has institutionalized a nationwide integrated and coordinated system to deal with cyber threats and related offences and has made sufficient legal and technical measures in the Telecommunications Act 2023, the Information Technology Act, (IT Act) 2000, Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023, and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 for citizens of the country, mandating data breach reporting, data protection, penalties, punishment etc.

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