

providing Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connectivity to the Government Institutions, including schools. This project is for providing Internet connection to Government schools in respective Gram Panchayats.

**Lack of Internet facilities for disadvantaged students**

510. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that only about 25 per cent of Indian households have internet facility and for rural households, that number drops to 15 percent;

(b) what are the steps being taken for the online education of the worst affected, the marginalised, rural and poor population; and

(c) whether Government has plans to have a proper policy on digital education, infrastructure and multiple languages?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'):

(a) As per the information provided by the D/o Telecommunication, there are 29.83 rural internet subscribers per 100 population in the country as on 31.12.2019, based on latest "Indian Telecom Service Performance Indicators Report" of TRAI.

(b) Government is committed to ensure equal access to online education for all sections of society. Online resources are provided through the various initiatives of the Government -SWAYAM, Swayam Prabha, DIKSHA, e-Pathshala, e-PG Pathshala, Virtual Labs, National Digital Library (NDL) and National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER). A comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes:-

(i) Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) ranked in top 100 NIRF or NAAC score of 3.26 can offer online programme without prior approval of UGC. Institutions with NAAC score of 3.01 to 3.25 can offer online programme with prior approval of UGC.

(ii) For conventional courses, the online content has been increased from up to 20% to 40% in regular degree programmes.

- (iii) DIKSHA the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs; and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades (one nation, one digital platform).
  - (iv) Study materials have been provided on an experimental basis for 12 channels for classes 1 to 12 on SWAYAM Prabha and actions are expedited to run these channels in a full-fledged manner.
  - (v) Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani.
  - (vi) Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.
- (c) National Education Policy 2020 has provisions for digital education, infrastructure and creation of contents in multiple languages. The details can be accessed on [-https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_Files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_Files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)

#### **Steps taken by UGC to ensure compliance of rules**

511. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the University Grants Commission has drawn any plan to ensure that the minimum duration, nomenclature and qualification for degree programme under which they are enrolling is strictly as per its notification on specification of degree and its amendments; and

(b) the steps taken for listing the precautions needed to be taken by students before enrolling in Open and Domestic Learning (ODL) programmes?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'):

(a) The University Grants Commission (UGC) has informed that in exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (3) of Section 22 of The UGC Act, 1956, the UGC has issued the notification on Specification of Degrees in March 2014 and its amendments from time to time ([https://www.ugc.ac.in/UGC\\_Regulations.aspx](https://www.ugc.ac.in/UGC_Regulations.aspx)). These specifications prescribe the nomenclature, level, duration and entry qualification along with the guiding principles, for compliance by all the Higher Educational Institutions.