

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

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 330  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY, 2021**

**INTERNET FACILITIES TO GRAM PANCHAYATS**

330 # Shri Sushil Kumar Modi:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that it was proposed to provide internet facility to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats by March 2020 under BharatNet project, whereas internet facility could be provided to 1.5 lakh panchayats only;
- (b) whether the Prime Minister has announced on 15 August to provide high speed internet facility to 6 lakh villages within one thousand days;
- (c) number of villages which have been provided internet facility till date, alongwith the expenditure incurred thereon; and
- (d) by when the remaining villages would be provided internet facility, alongwith the expenditure proposed to incur on the same?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) with broadband in the country. Target for completion of BharatNet connectivity upto Gram Panchayats was August 2021. However, pursuant to Lockdown and movement restrictions due to COVID-19 in the country, the project progress is affected.

As on 09.07.2021, a total number of 1,57,919 Gram Panchayats have been made Service Ready under the BharatNet. Further, as part of this project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided at all the GPs in the country. As on 09.07.2021, Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed in 1,04,310 GPs and 5,10,730 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided through BharatNet. As on 30.06.2021, the total disbursement of funds by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for the BharatNet project is about Rs. 29,485.31crore.

As announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the scope of BharatNet has been expanded to connect about 6 lakh inhabited villages on optical fiber across the country.

(d) On 30.06.2021, the Union Cabinet accorded approval for a revised strategy for implementation of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 16 States of the country. BharatNet is now being extended upto all inhabited villages beyond GPs in the said States. The estimated maximum viability gap funding approved for the above PPP model is Rs. 19,041 crore and the targeted date for completion of the project is August, 2023. The Cabinet has also accorded in-principle approval for extending broadband to all inhabited villages of the remaining States and Union Territories (UTs).

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