

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 51
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH DECEMBER, 2023**

INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

***51. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has employed any strategy to ensure internet accessibility and affordability across the country particularly in rural and remote areas and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether any initiative is being taken to bridge the digital divide in rural areas and promote internet penetration across the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof, particularly in the State of Rajasthan; and
- (d) the details of the collaboration by the Government with local authorities for connecting the internet services and training programs to align with the evolving technology landscape?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)**

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *51/11TH FOR 6TH DECEMBER, 2023 REGARDING “INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY.”

(a) to (d) Government has taken numerous initiatives to enhance internet connectivity in India. These include:-

- Ensuring adequate spectrum availability through open and transparent auction.
- Spectrum Reforms like allowing sharing, trading of spectrum and rationalization of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC).
- Procedure for Standing Advisory Committee for Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance for telecom towers eased significantly.
- Issuance of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules 2016 and amendment rules from time to time for faster and easier rollout of telecom infrastructure.
- Launch of Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal for faster Right of Way (RoW) approvals.

As a result, number of Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) have increased from 6.49 lakhs in March 2014 to 25.42 lakhs in March 2023. The number of internet users have increased from 25.15 crore in March 2014 to 88.12 crore in March 2023. The cost of data has reduced drastically from Rs 269 per GB in March 2014 to Rs 9.94 per GB in March 2023. India has seen the fastest rollout of 5G services in the world with 3.99 lakhs Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) deployed across around 738 districts. Median speed for mobile broadband has also improved from 1.30 Mbps in March 2014 to 75.80 Mbps in October 2023.

As on September '2023, out of 6,44,131 villages, around 6,16,300 number of villages are having mobile connectivity in the country, including 42,733 villages having mobile connectivity in the State of Rajasthan.

Further, Government of India is implementing various schemes including 4G saturation project for provision of 4G mobile services to cover all uncovered villages of the country including Rajasthan.

For Telecom related issues, State Broadband Committees are formed at the state level under the Chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary of that state, while at the District level, District Level Telecom Committees (DLTC) under the chairpersonship of District Collector/District Magistrate are formed.
