COMPUTING ABILITY OF RURAL POPULATION

4088.   SHRI D.RAJA:

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government's attention has been drawn to an analysis of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 71st Round report stating that only an estimated 8.8 percent of the rural population has computing ability in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(b)   in such a situation, the measures proposed to be taken to promote the digitalization campaign effectively throughout the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI P.P.CHAUDHARY)

(a): The Government has taken note of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 71st Round report on social consumption relating to education. As per this report, the proportion of persons (age 14 years and above) who are able to use computer for word processing/typing in rural India is found to be 7.8 %. Further, the report indicates that among people in the age group of 14-29 years in rural India, only 18% were able to operate a computer. Similarly, in the age group of 30-45 years, the percentage drops further to 4%. In the age group of 46-60 years, the percentage is just more than 1%. The proportion of households in the country having computer during 2014 is around 14% (only 6% of rural households and 29% of urban households possessed computer). This highlights that more than 15 crore rural households (@ 94% of 16.85 crore households) do not have computers and a significant number of these households are likely to be digitally illiterate.

(b): The initiatives taken by the Government to promote digitalization campaign throughout the country are as under:

(i)   Government is promoting establishment of Common Services Centres (CSCs) through CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd., a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC –SPV). One of the major roles of CSC is to provide citizen centric services in electronic mode (online) including Government-to-Citizens (G2C) and Business-to-Citizens (B2C) services in the locality of citizens. The CSCs also aim to provide individual access to internet to citizens in rural India where the ICT usage is very low. Presently a large number of Government services are being delivered to the citizens through CSCs across the country and consistent efforts are being made to increase the portfolio of e-Services.
   The ongoing CSC 2.0 Project under Digital India Programme aims to create a self sustaining network of 2.5 Lakh CSCs covering all Gram Panchayats (GPs), with at least one CSC at each Gram Panchayat. The CSC network has been designed not only to enable delivery of eServices, but also to create a digital highway empowering the digitally excluded communities by changing the way rural citizens learn, communicate, and manage their livelihoods, access health, financial, Educational services, Skill development services and other government services**.**

(ii)   National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN): The Government has approved, 'National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)/BharatNet', to establish network infrastructure to connect all the Gram Panchayats approximately (2.5 lakh) in the country by laying incremental fibre to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and

Blocks or through radio/satellite for providing broadband connectivity. It is being implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL).

(iii)   As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) report dated 17.2.2017, there were a total of 115.17 crore (approx.) telephone subscribers in the country as on 31.12.2016 (wireless - 112.73 crore and wireline - 2.44 crore). Out of these 46.86 crore (approx.) subscribers (wireless - 46.48 crore and wireline - 0.38 crore) are from rural India. Further, there were 23.61 crore total number of broadband subscribers across the country as on 31.12.2016.

(iv)   The Government of India approved a scheme entitled "IT Mass Literacy" in March 2014 which was renamed as "National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)" with an objective to make 10 lakh persons digitally literate across the country including rural India. Under Digital India, a new scheme entitled "Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA)" was approved in December 2014 with a target to train an additional 42.50 lakh candidates in digital literacy over a period of four years across the country including rural India. The total target of making 52.50 lakh persons digitally literate under both these schemes has been achieved in December 2016, out of which around 42% candidates were from rural India.

(v)   The Government has approved a scheme titled "Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)" to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31.03.2019. To ensure equitable geographical reach, each of the approximately 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats would be expected to register an average of 200-300 candidates. Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers/digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones, etc.), send and receive emails, browse internet, access Government Services, search for information, undertake cashless transactions, etc. and hence use IT to actively participate in the process of nation building.

In addition, Government has taken up several initiatives to promote cashless economy. A brief on these initiatives is at **Annexure**.

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Annexure
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Initiatives taken by Government towards promotion of cashless economy
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−   'Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres(CSCs)' as a sub-component under the Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) has been initiated in November 2016 for conducting awareness sessions on digital finance options available for rural citizens as well as enabling various mechanisms of digital financial services such as Unstructured Supplementary Service Data(USSD), Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Cards/Point of Sales(PoS), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System(AEPS) and eWallet etc. As on 05.04.2017, more than 2 crore beneficiaries and around 17.22 lakh Merchants have been trained/enabled under this programme. Further, sensitization drives have been carried out at 650 Districts and 5,735 Blocks throughout the country.

−   In addition to this, following initiatives have been taken for creating awareness amongst citizens:

o   A 24-hour TV channel named "DigiShala" and a website called "www.cashlessindia.gov.in", dedicated for facilitating awareness to citizens on cashless payment options and their use, have been launched on 9th December, 2016.

o   DigiDhan Melas: The DigiDhan Mela brings together various stakeholders of digital payment systems such as banks, e-wallet operators, telecom providers and institutions like Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), Common Services Centres(CSCs) and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

to promote digital payments. The objective is to enable citizens and merchants to undertake real time digital transactions and encourage them to use digital platforms for day to day transactions.

o   A two day awareness camp 'DigiDhan Mela' was organised on 17th -18th December, 2016 to promote digital payments

o   Lucky Grahak Yojana/ Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana**:** The Government has launched the Lucky Grahak Yojana for consumers and Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana for merchants. These schemes provide daily and weekly awards to citizens and merchants for undertaking digital transactions through Rupay cards, AEPS, UPI Apps and USSD. The objective is to incentivise citizens and merchants to adopt digital payment platforms.

o   The DigiDhan Melas are being organised in 100 cities till 14th April, 2017. MeitY has launched a website *www.digidhan.mygov.in* which provides the latest updates on demonetisation and the consumer and merchants can check the rewards under the LuckyGrahak and Digidhan Vypar Yojana.

–   A project titled "On-boarding of self-organised small and medium business/ traders on digital payment initiatives" has been approved for implementation by National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) covering small and medium size unorganized/self-organized business/traders. Under this, as on 06.4.2017, 3 Regional Workshop have been organised at Delhi, Jaipur and Mumbai.

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