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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2019-20)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations
of the Committee contained in their Fifty-ninth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on
'Review of National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) – Problems and Challenges']**

ELEVENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2020/Phalguna, Saka 1941 (Saka)

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'Review of National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) – Problems and Challenges']**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 20.03.2020

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 20.03.2020



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2020/Phalguna, Saka 1941 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2019-20)**

Dr. Shashi Tharoor - Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Locket Chatterjee
3. Shri Karti P. Chidambaram
4. Shri Sunny Deol
5. Dr. Nishikant Dubey
6. Shri Vijay Kumar Dubey
7. Choudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser
8. Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse
9. Dr. Sukanta Majumdar
10. Shri Dhairyasheel Sambhajirao Mane
11. Ms. Mahua Moitra
12. Shri P. R. Natarajan
13. Shri Santosh Pandey
14. Shri Nisith Pramanik
15. Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore
16. Dr. Gaddam Ranjith Reddy
17. Shri M V V Satyanarayana
18. Shri Sanjay Seth
19. Shri L.S. Tejasvi Surya
20. Dr. T. Sumathy (A) Thamizhachi Thangapandian
21. Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma

Rajya Sabha

22. Dr. Anil Agrawal
23. Dr. Subhash Chandra
24. Shri Y. S. Chowdary
25. Shri Suresh Gopi
26. Shri Md. Nadimul Haque
27. Shri Syed Nasir Hussain
28. Dr. Narendra Jadhav
29. Shri D. Kupendra Reddy
30. Shri Ronald Sapa Tlau
31. Shri Beni Prasad Verma

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Ganapati Bhat | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Director |
| 3. | Dr. Sagarika Dash | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri Abhishek Sharma | - | Assistant Executive Officer |

(ii)

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Information Technology (2019-2020), having been authorised by the Committee, present this Eleventh Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifty-ninth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Review of National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) – Problems and Challenges' relating to the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

2. The Fifty-ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 8 January, 2019. The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology furnished their Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifty-ninth Report on 29th April, 2019.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 18th March, 2020.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold in Chapter-I of the Report.

5. An analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifty-ninth Report of the Committee is given at Annexure-II.

New Delhi;
18 March , 2020
28 Phalguna, 1941(Saka)

DR. SHASHI THAROOR,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Information Technology.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Information Technology deals with action taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifty-Ninth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Review of National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)-Problems and Challenges' relating to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

2. The Fifty-Ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on the 08 January, 2019 and also laid in Rajya Sabha, the same day. It contained 16 Observations/ Recommendations. Replies of the Government in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and are categorized as under:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:-

Para Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Total : 12
Chapter II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies:-

Para No. NIL

Total : NIL
Chapter III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:-

Para Nos. 3, 7, 8, 10

Total : 04
Chapter IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature:-

Para No. NIL

Total : NIL
Chapter V

3. The Committee trust that utmost importance would be given to implementation of the Observations/Recommendations accepted by the Government. The Committee further desire that Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report should be furnished to them at an early date.

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

Digital Literacy – Need to scale up

(Recommendation Sl. No. 3)

5. The Committee note that 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) which was approved in March 2014 had a target to train 10 lakh citizens in select districts. It was closely followed by the 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) which was approved in December, 2014 with an additional target of 42.50 lakh candidates across the country. Both of these schemes were implemented concurrently across the country under which a total of 53.67 lakh beneficiaries were trained and duly certified. 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) was approved in February, 2017 to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019. The Committee note that all the three digital literacy schemes of the Government aimed to cover a total of approximately 6.5 crore individuals. However, till October, 2018, they have managed to cover just about 2 crore individuals. As a percentage of total population of India, which stands at around 1.2 billion, the coverage of all the three digital literacy schemes is a miniscule 1.67 percent. The Committee are also concerned about very low achievement under these schemes in States/UTs viz. Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya etc. Taking note of the low coverage of digital literacy schemes, the Committee recommend steps to scale up the coverage of digital literacy programs commensurate to the requirements of a population of more than 1.2 billion people. The criterion of covering only one person per household as it exists in the scheme seems too restrictive. In order to increase the coverage under PMGDISHA, the Ministry may consider changing the criteria and do away with the above restriction. The Ministry may also ensure adequate representation of disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) etc. under the schemes and apprise the Committee about the steps taken in this direction.

6. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology have stated as under:

"NDLM and DISHA schemes were concluded after achievement of their respective targets of training 10 Lakh and 42.5 Lakh candidates respectively. So far, a total amount of Rs. 538 Crore has been released under the PMGDISHA Scheme as against the total fund requirements of Rs. 2351. 38 Crore. Till 12th April 2019, a total of 2.19 Crore candidates have been registered, 2.16 Crore candidates trained and more than 1.26 crore candidates have been certified. As noted by the Committee, the progress of the schemes in certain north-eastern states and Union Territories has been observed to be slow due to various reasons such as poor internet connectivity; inaccessible training centres; low motivation among people. In order to speed up the implementation of the scheme in NER and other states/UTS where achievements are low efforts are being made to improve awareness about the scheme. Promotional activities such as media publicity, workshops, competitions among the community, etc. are being undertaken to cover various segments of the population in an inclusive manner. Special attention is also being given to NER region. The Implementing Agency has been advised to identify and affiliate training partners/centres in un-covered Gram Panchayats. The Ministry has sent communication to Chief Secretaries of the States to review and speed up implementation. As regards to the criterion of covering one person from a household, it is stated that this criterion was kept in order to cover as many rural households as possible within the available budget for the scheme. Moreover, by providing digital literacy to one person from a household, the scheme intends to have a ripple effect on the family and community as a whole. In an effort to bridge the digital divide and ensure adequate representation of disadvantaged groups, the scheme guidelines stipulate that preference would be given to Scheduled Castes (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST), Below Poverty Line (BPL), women, differently-abled persons and minorities. So far under the Scheme 41,22,697 SC candidates, 19,98,775 ST candidates and also 1,08,73,186 women candidates have been trained under the PMGDISHA Scheme. Category specific viz. SC, ST, NER and General funds are being allocated under the Scheme to ensure adequate representation of disadvantages groups. "

7. **The Committee had noted that the three digital literacy schemes of the Government i.e. NDLM, DISHA and PMGDISHA aimed at covering a total population of 6.5 crore approximately. However, till October, 2018, only 2 crore individuals could be covered under these schemes. As against the total population of India, which stands at around 1.2 billion, the coverage of above three schemes combined stood at a**

miniscule 1.67 percent. While expressing concern over low coverage of the schemes and also non achievement of targets in certain States/UTs., the Committee had recommended the Ministry to scale up the coverage of digital literacy programs. They had also suggested that for achieving this, the Ministry need to review/revisit criterion of covering only one person per household under PMGDISHA scheme. The Ministry have informed that under the PMGDISHA scheme, as against the total fund requirement of Rs. 2351.38 Crore, an amount of Rs. 538 Crore has been released. The progress of the scheme in certain North-Eastern States and Union Territories has been slow due to reasons such as poor internet connectivity, inaccessible training centres, low motivation among people etc. The criterion of covering one person from each household was kept in order to cover as many rural households as possible within the available budget for the scheme and in an effort to bridge the digital divide, the Ministry are taking several initiatives such as improving awareness about the scheme through promotional activities such as media publicity, workshops etc. for speeding up the implementation. The Committee find that the Ministry's reply has been vague on measures taken to address poor internet connectivity & inaccessible training centres and are of the view that the above initiatives are grossly inadequate and not yielding desired results as witnessed from the negligible coverage under all three schemes. The Ministry need to take measures to scale up the coverage of digital literacy programs commensurate to the requirements of the population so that their benefits can reach every section of the society. There is a need to obtain feedback on reasons for low motivation amongst people to join digital literacy programs and step up identification and affiliation of training partners/centers in un-covered Gram Panchayats. In this regard, the Ministry may explore giving preference to local training partners/Centres who are well acquainted with the local needs/requirements and who can also motivate more people to join digital literacy programs. The Committee desire that the concrete steps taken for scaling up the coverage of digital literacy schemes along with the availability of funds for the scheme may be conveyed to the Committee.

PMGDISHA scheme – Non-achievement of targets & insufficient allocation of funds

(Recommendation Sl. No. 7 & 8)

8. The Committee are concerned to note that the Government had approved the scheme titled 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) in February, 2017 to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019. However, the achievement stands at a mere 1.45 crore as on 22nd October, 2018 which is just about 24% of the set target. Regarding the reasons for non-achievement of targets, the Ministry have informed that non-availability of Aadhar in NER States, non-availability of training centres/CSCs in some locations, lack of awareness among public, connectivity issues, infrastructure issues etc. continue to remain the challenge for the scheme. Now that only 24% have been achieved in two years, the chances of covering the remaining 4.5 crore rural households in a period of just five months seems quite bleak. While expressing their concern on non-achievement of targets in the important PMGDISHA scheme, the Committee recommend that urgent measures should be taken up to address the challenges and speed up implementation of the scheme.

9. When asked about the steps being taken/proposed to achieve the target of training 6 crore people under PMGDISHA by March 2019, the Ministry replied that the scheme was approved on 08.2.2017 at a total outlay of Rs. 2,351.38 Crore (approx.). An amount of Rs. 1175.69 crore was required during FY 2017-18 and a similar amount was required during FY 2018-19 for implementation of the Scheme. However, so far, a total amount of Rs. 500 crore has been allocated for the implementation of the scheme. Based on the availability of the funds, more than 1.60 crore candidates have been trained so far. In order to achieve the remaining target, the Ministry have requested for additional funds from Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance at RE stage and in the BE of next Financial Year. Expressing hope that the Ministry would be able to turn around the low achievement and cover maximum target under the scheme, the Committee exhort the

Ministry to seek additional funds from Ministry of Finance to ensure that the scheme can be sufficiently scaled up to achieve the target of covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019.

10. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology have stated as under:

"Due to paucity of funds, so far, an amount of Rs. 538 Crore could be released under the PMGDISHA Scheme, hence the targets envisaged under the Scheme could not be achieved. Regarding the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir, which are yet to be covered under Aadhaar, any Identity proof which has a photo as well as the address of the candidate, such as NPR Card, Voter ID, Jan Dhan Yojana/Bank Passbook, State Permanent Resident Certificate issued by the SDM/DC office and any ID issued by Central/State Government, is also considered to register as a beneficiary under PMGDISHA scheme. In order to achieve the scheme targets, locations where CSCs are functioning well and have completed both training and examination under PMGDISHA, targets have been enhanced. While in other states, alternative Training Centres are being given permission where ever the CSCs are facing problem in implementing the scheme. Efforts are being undertaken to increase awareness about the scheme through workshops, seminars, community engagement activities, media publicity, competitions and other activities by using e-learning, print and electronic media, etc. to cover various segments of the population in an all-inclusive manner. The Ministry is now focusing on states where coverage is low. Special attention is given to NER region. Implementing agency has been advised to identify and affiliate training partners/centres in un-covered Gram Panchayats. Ministry has sent communication to Chief Secretary's of the states to review and speed up implementation. Further funds have been sought for timely achievement of envisaged targets."

(Recommendation Sl. No. 7)

"So far, an amount of Rs. 538 Crore has been released to CSC-SPV for implementation of the scheme. For FY 2019-20, Rs. 400 Crore has been allocated for the PMGDISHA scheme. The Ministry shall seek additional funds at RE stage so that the targets under the scheme can be achieved at the earliest. The Ministry is confident that if sufficient funds are made available for the scheme this year, the uptake in the scheme can be scaled up through awareness sessions and training workshops to successfully achieve the remaining targets."

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

11. The Committee note that the targets envisaged under PMGDISHA scheme could not be achieved due to paucity of funds. To address non-availability of Aadhaar in States of Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir which are yet to be covered under Aadhaar, initiatives are being taken for use of alternate photo identity cards. Targets are being enhanced in locations where CSCs are functioning well and efforts are also being made to increase awareness about the scheme through workshops and seminars, special attention to NER region etc. The Committee feel that all the above factors should have been kept in mind and steps taken at the time of launch of the scheme so that the achievement of targets would not have been affected so badly. It is very unfortunate that the scheme which was expected to cover 6 crore households in 24 months could achieve only 1.45 crore (24% of the target) in 19 months. The Committee urge that above issues be resolved and measures including periodic review of the status be taken urgently to address the challenges and speed up the implementation of the scheme. There is a need for regular follow-up with Chief Secretaries of the laggard States to review and speed up implementation of the digital literacy schemes along with addressing the issue of lack of availability of funds for PMGDISHA. The Committee may be apprised of the target achieved upto 31st March, 2019, the number of households covered during 2019-20 and the target set for 2020-21.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 10)

12. The Committee note that an individual can enrol under the PMGDISHA scheme by visiting a CSC/training centre in his/her vicinity. The eligibility criteria states that the candidate should be in the age group of 14 – 60 years, digitally illiterate and none of the family members of the candidate should be digitally literate. The above details of the beneficiary are counter verified through a Panchayat Functionary/Gazetted Officer/School Principal and thereafter, the candidates are registered on the Scheme Portal. After registration, unique Username and Password is provided to the beneficiary, which can be used to study the self learning e-modules through the LMS at the respective training

center. In so far as the grievance redressal mechanism is concerned, they can be lodged at grievances@pmgdisha.in. Besides the email, other means to lodge a grievance includes telephone/ mobile, social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter etc. and helpdesk teams at central and state level. The grievances are also received and resolved on Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) by the Ministry. The Ministry also informed that to obtain student feedback, a Rapid Assessment System (RAS) has been integrated with the scheme. It enables the candidates to share their experience of training, quality of trainer and satisfaction level by availing this service. Keeping in view the fact that the enrolment procedure for PMGDISHA has an element of discretion owing to stipulated counter verification by Panchayat Functionary/Gazetted Officer/School Principal, the Committee recommend that there should be transparency in the enrolment procedure to prevent any misuse of the discretionary power. The scheme should also provide adequate means to the applicants to contest their rejection or to report any violation of the eligibility norms as prescribed under the scheme. The grievance redressal and feedback mechanism particularly with regard to fees, certification and enrollment etc. should be adequately strengthened to make the scheme equally accessible to all the beneficiaries and remove any element of discrimination.

13. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology have stated as under:

" During registration of candidates under the scheme, due measures are undertaken to ensure that only those candidates are registered who adhere to the eligibility criteria mentioned in the scheme guidelines. The Implementing Agency has ensured transparency with regard to scheme implementation through the following measures:

- All the relevant information related to scheme is made available on the web portal.
- For addressing the grievances of candidates, a grievance redressal form is available at <https://www.pmgdisha.in/grievance-redressal-form/>
- All the grievances received regarding the scheme are addressed by PMGDISHA Programme Management Unit (PMU) on a regular basis.

- Details of rejection of any Training Partner (TP)/ Centre are made available on the dashboard of the respective TP or CSC.
- There is a rating mechanism given to each beneficiary through their respective PMGDISHA dashboard which helps to them to share their rating about the training/ trainer.
- Grievances and queries of TP's/CSCs related to fee payment are addressed via email, helpline number and Helpdesk of the PMU on a regular basis.
- PMU representatives regularly visit the centers to examine all the parameters required for training centers and interact with the VLEs, trainers, candidates trained and certified and take action in case any malpractice found.
- The grievances by candidates regarding fees, certification and enrollment etc. are also received and resolved on Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) by the Ministry."

14. The Committee are surprised to find that while the eligibility criteria for enrolment under PMGDISHA scheme requires that the candidate and all his/her family members should be digitally illiterate, the means/avenues available to the candidates for redressal of grievances are all digital based i.e. all the information related to the scheme is available on web portal, the grievance redressal form is available online & the grievances of candidates regarding fees, certification and enrolment etc. is received and resolved through CPGRAMS. It may not be possible for a digitally illiterate person to access online information about the scheme or to lodge his/her grievances using an online grievance form or through CPGRAMS. Instead of enumerating details as to how many grievances have been received and how many of them have been resolved and what measures have been taken to prevent misuse of opportunities under the scheme, the Ministry have outlined the existing provisions relating to grievance redressal. The Committee desire that the grievance redressal mechanism should be made user friendly and transparent so that candidates having no prior exposure to digital literacy can have equal access to grievance redressal avenues available under the scheme.

CHAPTER II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN
ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Digital Literacy – An overview

(Recommendation Sl. No. 1)

The Committee note that digital Literacy is a key component of the Govt. of India's vision of an empowered society. Under the Digital Literacy schemes being carried out by the Ministry viz. (i) National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM), (ii) Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA), and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), digital literacy has been defined as the ability of individuals and communities to understand and use digital technologies for meaningful actions within life situations. Any individual who can operate computer/laptop/tablet/smart phone and use other IT related tools is being considered as digitally literate. As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 71st Round report on social consumption relating to education, the proportion of households in the country having computers during 2014 was around 14% (only 6% in rural households and 29% in urban households possessed computer). The above NSSO report further indicated that among people in the age group of 14-29 years, only 18.3% were able to operate a computer in rural areas as compared to 48.9% in urban areas. Similarly, in the age group of 30-45 years, the percentage dropped further to 4% in rural areas as compared to 24.3% in urban areas. In the age group of 46-60 years, the percentage was just above 1% in rural areas as compared to 6.8% in urban areas.

The Committee are concerned to note that the percentage of households in the country having computers during 2014 was just around 14%. Further, among people in the age group of 14-29 years, only 18.3% were able to operate a computer in rural areas as compared to 48.9% in urban areas and in the age group of 30-45 years, the percentage dropped further to 4% in rural areas as compared to 24.3% in urban areas. From the above statistics, which present a very gloomy picture regarding access to computers and overall digital literacy in the country, the Committee are inclined to conclude that the digital literacy efforts of the Ministry are far from satisfactory. This necessitates that proactive measures are taken to improve the situation at the digital literacy front. Keeping in view the fact that digital literacy is a necessary pre-requisite for successful implementation of 'Digital India' program which aims to empower people who are not IT-literate, the Ministry should have a sustained focus on digital literacy programmes and these need to be streamlined to the needs of the people and suitably strengthened to achieve their intended objectives.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology is making constant efforts to provide

digital literacy to the population of India through various schemes and programmes. Through such schemes, Ministry is keen to include the maximum number of people in the ambit of Digital literacy. After successful completion of 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) and 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA), the Ministry is currently implementing a scheme titled Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan with an aim to train 6 crore persons (one person per household) on digital literacy in the rural areas.

Through PMGDISHA, proactive measures are being undertaken to improve digital literacy in the country.

Digital literacy training under PMGDISHA scheme has created a new wave of social empowerment among citizens in marginalised communities by enhancing their learning levels and confidence significantly to improve livelihood options and overall quality of life.

By covering 51 percent women, 20 percent Scheduled Caste communities, 8 percent Scheduled Tribe communities and 43 percent OBC candidates so far, PMGDISHA is on its way to achieve the objective of promoting a digitally inclusive society by mainstreaming the marginalised and weaker sections through information, knowledge and skill. Digital literacy training under PMGDISHA scheme has enabled citizens to access information for enhancing their education and skills, access healthcare, etc.

Further, National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) an autonomous Scientific Society under MeitY is offering various short term Digital Literacy Courses of 40-80 hours duration and training larger number of candidates in various Digital Literacy courses. NIELIT has 44 own centers and more than 800 accredited centers across the country which are imparting Digital literacy and other IT courses.

In addition to the above, digital literacy training initiatives have been taken by various state Governments. Also, short term digital literacy courses are being offered by various private training Institutions. Under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) various companies like INTEL, Bharti Airtel, TATA trust, SAP India, NASSCOM foundation and L&T, ITC etc. are offering digital literacy training across the country.

Digital Literacy – Need for consolidation and continuity

(Recommendation Sl. No. 2)

The Committee note that 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) was approved in March 2014 and had a target to train 10 lakh citizens in select districts in 18 months. Subsequently, the 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) was approved in December, 2014 with an additional target to train

42.50 lakh candidates across the country in 4 years. After the launch of DISHA in December, 2014, both the NDLM and DISHA schemes, which were almost similar in design as well as implementation, were running concurrently. The Committee find that rolling out multiple schemes having similar objectives within a short span of time creates confusion in the minds of the intended beneficiaries and also makes the task of evaluation/monitoring cumbersome and complicated.

The Committee recommend that digital literacy should be given due importance and instead of having short term parallel schemes with different names, digital literacy programs launched/implemented by the Government should be based on long-term planning and have perceptible outcomes. The Government may also examine adding a component of digital literacy to general literacy programs and continuing digital literacy program on an ongoing basis with particular focus on young people to improve overall digital literacy in our country of more than 1.2 billion people.

Reply of the Government

In order to enable citizens with the capability to access and leverage technologies and digital services through digital literacy, the Ministry launched the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) in August 2014. Under the scheme, 10 lakh persons, one from every eligible family, were provided basic digital literacy training. In order to expand the scope of the scheme to include grassroots government functionaries, a new scheme called Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) was initiated in December 2014. The scheme had a target of training additional 42.5 lakh persons, which included ASHA and Anganwadi workers and Fair Price Shop owners. Both the schemes ran concurrently.

Following the successful implementation of NDLM/DISHA schemes, the Government has launched a new digital literacy scheme namely 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).

Pradhan Mantri Digital Saksharta Abhiyan sought to ensure even geographical reach across the country through an approach focused on 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats, which are expected to register 250-300 candidates in each Gram Panchayat.

Apart from digital empowerment of citizens whereby they can operate digital devices, the scheme also has the following objectives, which are not just functional but transformational in terms of wider impact:

1. Help securely access information about educational courses, healthcare, and livelihood generation.
2. Educate and enable citizens to use digital payment systems like e-wallets, USSD and BHIM etc.
3. Inform citizens about various government schemes and policies.

The PMGDISHA scheme has so far enrolled 2,19,14,950 candidates out of which 2,16,56,456

candidates have been trained. As on 12th April 2019, a total of 1,26,81,978 candidates have been duly certified. The programme would be continued to achieve the total target of 6 Crore beneficiaries. With respect to adding a component of digital literacy to general literacy programmes, the content for digital literacy has already been shared with Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

Digital Literacy – Need for qualitative impact assessment

(Recommendation Sl. No.4)

The Committee find that in Digital Literacy programs/initiatives of the Government, much of the focus is on the numbers/quantitative parameters instead of the quality of training or the qualitative parameters. Although the impact assessment of digital literacy schemes have been carried out by IIT Delhi and Council for Social Development, Delhi, there is inconsistency and variation in the findings of the two studies with regard to data on various aspects such as usage of digital device, level of confidence etc. Further, there is no component of monitoring repeat transactions by individuals trained in NDLM, DISHA and PMGDISHA schemes to ensure that there is a behavioral change in the trainees and they continue to make use of digital/IT tools even after completion of their training. The Committee also find that under NDLM scheme, 16 out of total 36 States/UTs have achieved 100% certification of enrolled candidates which seems quite unrealistic. The Committee feel that the Ministry need to look into these aspects and ensure that the impact assessment studies are more objective and realistic.

The committee, therefore, recommend giving due focus to qualitative parameters through continuous feedback mechanism and strengthening of monitoring mechanism to ensure that there is a positive behavioural change in successful trainees and they continue to use digital/IT tools even after completion of their training. The Committee would like to be informed of the specific steps taken to address the aforesaid concerns. The Ministry may also inform about the measures taken to achieve 100% certification of candidates under NDLM in various States/UTs.

Reply of the Government

In order to ensure quality of training provided to beneficiaries, regular feedbacks are taken from the candidates and trainers. The scheme has provisions for continuous feedback by the candidates, training partners, training centres or any other stakeholder. To obtain feedback of students, a Rapid Assessment System (RAS) has been integrated with the Scheme. On completion of test, the beneficiary receives a SMS on their registered mobile number through which they can provide instantaneous feedback on their training, either through SMS or Web Portal or Mobile Application. The RAS enables the candidates to share their experience of training, quality of trainer and satisfaction level under the scheme. Additionally, the beneficiaries have been provided with a provision of rating the quality of training centre (by marking a star) on their dashboard itself.

Citizens can also share their feedback/concerns through email at helpdesk@pmgdisha.in or call on toll free Helpline number 180030003468.

Also, for monitoring of the scheme, various committees at Central, State and District level have been formulated.

With respect to strengthening of monitoring mechanism to ensure that there is a positive behavioral change in successful trainees and they continue to use digital/ IT tools even after completion of their training, the candidates are encouraged to enrol at their nearest Training Centre for further courses. As the TCs are in vicinity of the candidates, it enables the candidates to use the facilities, infrastructure and guidance of the CSC even after the training is over.

It is seem that NDLM, DISHA and PMGDISHA training has helped candidates to understand and use digital payments along other government services.

Regarding 100% certification under the NDLM Scheme, it is stated that under NDLM total 10,59,065 candidates were enrolled for training, out of which 10 lakh candidates were successfully certified. Further, under NDLM/DISHA schemes, enhancement of target by 30% was permitted in the States/UTs where original targets were achieved by due ratification by the 3rd Project Review and Steering Group meeting held on September 29, 2016, which helped to achieve 100% certification of candidates under NDLM in various States/UTs.

Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres (CSCs)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 5)

The Committee note that this scheme was initiated in November 2016 wherein more than 2 crore beneficiaries and more than 27 lakh Merchants were trained/enabled over a period of 6 months with a total expenditure of Rs. 42.98 Crore. This scheme has since been closed after achievement of its intended objectives. It was an exclusive scheme for training/awareness of merchants particularly in the wake of demonetization which made digital payments all the more necessary. The Committee are of the opinion that in order to promote digital payments, just like consumers, training/awareness of merchants is equally important. Recognizing this fact, Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres (CSCs) scheme focused on training merchants in digital payments. After achievement of its intended objective, this scheme has since been closed.

Underscoring the need to promote digital payments and the important role of merchants in this regard, the Committee recommend that the Ministry's initiative to train/enable merchants to promote digital payments should continue through such schemes and the Ministry may review their

decision to close this scheme or add a component to PMGDISHA scheme to cater to specific requirements of merchants pertaining to digital payments.

Reply of the Government

Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres (DFIAA) was 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. Under this programme, more than 2 crore beneficiaries and more than 27 lakh Merchants were trained/enabled. In addition, sensitization drives were carried out at 650 Districts and 5,735 Blocks throughout the country.

To sustain the momentum built among people with regard to digital payments, it was decided to include a module on digital payments as part of the digital literacy curriculum under PMGDISHA. The learning outcomes under the PMGDISHA scheme requires each candidate to carry out cashless transactions using digital financial tools such as AePS, USSD, UPI, etc. The scheme is thus enabling citizens to learn about cashless transactions and hence contribute towards creating a less cash society in rural India.

Following the PMGDISHA training, a large number of candidates have started availing G2C and other services through CSC. Their confidence and trust in digital transactions have increased significantly. PMGDISHA training has helped candidates to understand and use Aadhaar based digital payments more easily. After seeding of Aadhaar with bank accounts and enhancement in banking technology, AePS transactions have increased tremendously over past two years.

Furthermore, the Government of India is making continuous efforts for promoting a less cash economy and to provide the facility of seamless digital payment to all citizens of India in a convenient manner. For achieving this, the “DIGIDHAN Mission” has been set up under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to enhance the digital payment transaction and to enable digital payment infrastructure throughout the country.

Digital Finance for Rural India: Creating Awareness and Access through Common Service Centres (CSCs) – Need for adequate monitoring mechanism

(Recommendation Sl. No. 6)

The Committee note that under this scheme, more than 2 crore beneficiaries and more than 27 lakh Merchants were trained/ enabled over a period of 6 months with a total expenditure of Rs. 42.98 Crore. However, when asked whether there was any third party audit/monitoring/evaluation mechanism for the quality of training imparted to the beneficiaries under this scheme, the Committee

were informed that there was no component of third-party evaluation under the said programme.

The Committee are surprised to find that this scheme of the Government was implemented devoid of any audit/monitoring/evaluation mechanism and strongly recommend that adequate monitoring mechanism be put in place for all the ongoing and planned digital literacy schemes.

Reply of the Government

The objective of the programme (Digital Finance for Rural India) was to create awareness about various digital payment systems and to facilitate their access to the most vulnerable and poor communities with a focus on women, farmers, hawkers, small traders, marginalized sections etc. in the rural areas of the country. Since it was an awareness programme; hence there was no third party audit/evaluation under the said programme. As DFIAA scheme was a sub component of DISHA scheme, it was periodically reviewed by the Project Review and Steering Committee constituted for DISHA Scheme. However, suggestions of the committee have been noted.

PMGDISHA scheme – Increasing the number of Training Partners

(Recommendation Sl. No. 9)

The Committee note that PMGDISHA Scheme envisages affiliating entities like NGOs/ Institutions/ Corporates, desirous of providing digital literacy training as Training Partners with CSC-SPV subject to meeting prescribed norms. The indicative norms for affiliating training partners include certain conditions that a training partner must be an organization registered in India, conducting business in the domain of education/ IT literacy for more than three years and having Permanent Income Tax Account Number (PAN) and audited statements of accounts for at least last three years. The institution/organization should be registered under any act of law in India, e.g., in the case of a company it must be registered with the Registrar of Companies, in case of Society, it must be registered with the Registrar of Societies and so on and so forth. The partner must have clearly defined objectives, well-documented processes and procedures covering the entire range of education/ IT literacy training. Organizations that do not satisfy the above conditions were not accepted as training partners. This implies that under the scheme, there is ample opportunity for partners to undertake the task of providing digital literacy and there is a clear need to encourage these institutions/bodies. The Committee are however, concerned to note that though a total no. of 4,144 applications for training partner have been received by CSC-SPV till date only 600 around applications have been accepted. These training partners have a total of 36,858 training centers across the country.

Keeping in view the large mandate of the PMGDISHA scheme to cover a whopping 6 crore households, the Committee feel that there is a need to encourage and scale up enrolment of training partners with proven expertise in IT domain and recommend that suitable modification may be made

in the scheme to incorporate more training partners. However, while doing so the Committee also desire that the commitment level of training partners should not be compromised and the Ministry should ensure that only committed partners following adequate data privacy norms are involved in the process so that the data of the trainees are also protected. The Ministry may also explore the option of tie-ups with established IT institutions to promote digital literacy.

Reply of the Government

Under PMGDISHA, CSC-SPV has so far affiliated 636 Training Partners / 1,31,615 Training Centres (including 89,792 CSCs) across India.

Under the scheme, only those entities have been empanelled as Training Partners (TPs) which fulfilled the criteria stipulated by the scheme guidelines. Also, regular visits by Central, State and District resources are undertaken at premises of Training partners and Training centres for proper screening and scrutiny of these implementation agencies/partners and training centers/CSCs.

Moreover, more emphasis is being laid on imparting the training through CSCs so that digital infrastructure can be made readily available at the Gram Panchayat level across the country. This shall have the added advantage of building infrastructure at the CSCs, which in turn would help in strengthening of rural economy.

Also efforts are being made to engage established IT institutions to work under the scheme as Training partners or under their respective CSR initiatives.

PMGDISHA scheme – improving accessibility through mobile devices

(Recommendation Sl. No. 11)

The Committee note that based on the experience in implementation of NDLM and DISHA schemes, the Ministry have incorporated several changes in the PMGDISHA scheme which inter-alia include specific focus on rural areas through a Panchayat centric approach, inclusion of popular citizen centric services, promotion of cashless transactions through inclusion of mobile banking, digital wallets, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS), and PoS etc. The beneficiaries are also required to undertake at least 5 electronic payments transactions using UPI (including BHIM app), USSD, PoS, AEPS, Cards, Internet Banking. Further, the learning outcome of the beneficiaries is being measured based on the ability to open e-mail account and digital locker, sending/receiving e-mail, registration on Scholarship portals such as National Scholarship Portal, e-pathshala of NCERT, Virtual Open School (VOS) of NIOS etc., creating login credentials for IRCTC, submission of online Application for G2C certificates such as Caste certificate, Domicile certificate, Income certificate etc. and applying online for various Government run Schemes like Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan

Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), etc. The Committee also note that as per the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 71st Round report on social consumption relating to education, the proportion of households in the Country having computers during 2014 was around 14% (only 6% in rural households and 29% in urban households possessed computer).

While appreciating Ministry's efforts to impart basic training in digital literacy covering usage of email, digital payment tools, availing various Government to Citizen (G2C) services etc., the Committee are of the view that access to costly IT hardware, software and connectivity issues pose a major hurdle in adoption of IT tools for making use of services such as email, digital payments and availing various G2C services. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the digital literacy programs may be suitably reoriented to incorporate greater use of feature/smart phones and associated apps since they are low cost, easy to use and popular amongst the masses in comparison to the conventional IT hardware and allied software. The content may be user-friendly and appropriate for all ages. The Ministry may also explore the option of making the training content available on feature/smart phones through popular messaging apps such as Whatsapp etc.

Reply of the Government

The digital literacy training provided through PMGDISHA covers all digital devices like desktop, laptop, tablets and mobile phones. Feature and smart phones are also covered under the curriculum. The training at the ground level is also imparted through laptop/ computers, tablets and smart phones.

The content (made in 22 languages) for the scheme is suitable for 14-60 age group and is available on the PMGDISHA website and YouTube. It is also made available on the dashboard of every beneficiary. A mobile app is also available for accessing course content in multi-lingual format.

The scheme provides multi-modal, multi-lingual content for dissemination of digital literacy. The training content of the scheme has been designed in a user-friendly manner and great care has been taken to develop a content that is appropriate for all ages. The content has been developed in consultation with UNESCO, NASSCOM, Intel, IGNOU, NIELIT, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), IT for Change, Open Knowledge Network India, Digital Empowerment Foundation etc. so that their expertise can be used to develop an all-inclusive content. The content covers information about all digital devices including laptops, tablets and feature/ smart phones.

The training at the ground level is imparted through laptop/ computers, tablets and feature/ smart phones. This enables the candidates to understand the characteristics and utility of all the major digital devices including feature/smart phones as they are low cost, easy to use and popular amongst the masses.

Training content is available in HTML, pdf and video formats through PMGDISHA website, YouTube channel etc. Moreover, content has been pushed to various Whatsapp groups created by State/ district teams of States/ UTs implementing the scheme. Training Centre, candidates and even common public can access the content easily.

Also, social media posters are uploaded on the PMGDISHA Facebook page, Twitter handle and Whatsapp groups which provide information regarding the content and scheme to the general public.

Digital Literacy – coordination amongst different agencies

(Recommendation Sl. No. 12)

The Committee note that several challenges are being witnessed in implementation of Digital literacy programs which include lack of awareness about the benefits of digital literacy among the masses, lack of availability of requisite training infrastructure and resources at several places in the country, internet connectivity issues in rural areas, lack of support from State Govt. & other stakeholders, Localization/Language issues and difficulty to enter the non-accessible and sparsely populated areas. The Committee are given to understand that officials concerned as well as the PMU at CSC-SPV reviews the progress of the Scheme on a regular basis to resolve any ground level issues in a time bound manner. The Committees set up at various levels at Central, States and Districts also provide feedback from time to time. The Committee are of the opinion that most of the above problems/challenges in implementation of digital literacy programs particularly those related to internet connectivity in rural areas, support from State Govt. & other stakeholders, localization /language issues and difficulty to enter the non-accessible and sparsely populated areas etc. need close coordination amongst different Central/State agencies and entities.

The Committee emphasize that the State Governments and other agencies are equal partners in the digital literacy endeavour and they have to be taken on board. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Ministry must ensure close coordination amongst different Central/State agencies and entities on issues pertaining to implementation of digital literacy programs.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has taken steps to ensure close coordination among various stakeholders of the scheme. Thirty (30) states have nominated a State Implementing Agency (SIA) for monitoring of the PMGDISHA scheme in their respective States/UTs. *It has been observed that most of the States and SIAs are supportive. However, some of the States viz. Jharkhand, Telangana and Haryana are very supportive in scheme implementation and review the status of implementation of the scheme on a regular basis at State/district level.*

With respect to smooth implementation of digital literacy programs is concerned, Empowered Committee constituted under the chairmanship of Secretary, MeitY and Project Review and Steering Group (PRSG) chaired by Joint Secretary (HRD), MeitY are entrusted with taking decisions regarding any policy level interventions in the scheme and ensure time-bound implementation of the Scheme respectively.

At the State/ District level, State Level Committee headed by the Principal Secretary (IT) and District Level Committee under the Chairmanship of District Magistrate/ Collector have been constituted to oversee / monitor the implementation at the district and block level.

Apart from monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, another major objective of these agencies is to suggest mid-term course correction for better implementation of the scheme. For instance, the Ministry has received requests from these entities in certain states for increasing the target which have been reviewed and necessary action has been taken on such requests.

Moreover, in order to ensure active participation of States and increase support of State agencies, regular workshops are undertaken by the implementing agency. In order to increase awareness about the scheme, publicity campaigns, training sessions for VLEs and district resources are organized at state, district and block level. Till March 2019, 85 State level and 856 district level workshops have been conducted under the PMGDISHA scheme.

PMGDISHA – Focus on laggard States/UTs

(Recommendation Sl. No. 13)

The Committee note that while some States like Jharkhand, Telangana and Haryana are very supportive in scheme implementation and review the status of implementation of scheme on regular basis at State/districts levels, the achievement in terms of Students Registered, Training Completed and Certified Candidates is very low in other States/UTs like Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Sikkim etc. This calls for an analysis of the reasons for stark contrast in performance of this scheme in different States/UTs so that the best practices in the better performing States can be replicated in the laggard States/UTs to bridge the gap.

The Committee recommend that urgent steps may be taken to ensure uniform implementation of the scheme in all the States/UTs. The good practices in some States may be replicated in other States and also the States which are very supportive and doing very well need to be incentivized so that there is visible impact. Ministry may look at options such as providing special incentives to States/UTs achieve the desirable outcome.

Reply of the Government

The state teams of the Implementing Agency are regularly in touch with the state government officials and organize awareness programmes by inviting Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Members of Parliament (MPs) and District Magistrates (DMs) to improve coordination of the scheme. Distinguished guests are also invited to distribute certificates to successful candidates.

In order to inform stakeholders of good practices under the scheme by VLEs or agencies, weekly and monthly newsletters are published which feature new initiatives undertaken and success stories from various States. Success stories are also circulated on social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to inform the stakeholders about various initiatives. These stories are widely circulated so that all the States/ UTs are motivated to learn from such initiatives and programmes and achieve their targets on time.

For increasing the awareness amongst general public about the PMGDISHA scheme, the following measures are taken:

- To generate awareness about the Scheme and to impart training to the stakeholders, state/district /block level workshops are being conducted across the country. Till March 2019, 85 State level and 856 district level workshops have been conducted under the scheme.
- The content has been made available in 22 scheduled languages and English. The content is being distributed in both online and offline mode.
- Affiliation of Training centres in uncovered Gram Panchayats is being promoted.

Success stories from states are also circulated in peer to peer fashion so that the benchmark set in one State/ UT can be replicated in other states as well. For instance, State government in Jharkhand has been very supportive of the scheme. Jharkhand is one of the rural states in India and has faced issues in implementation of digital literacy schemes in the past due to poor connectivity and electricity constraints. By implementing the BHARATNET project, Jharkhand has resolved the issues and overcome the barriers by implementing PMGDISHA scheme in full-fledged manner.

Each of the State/UT government has identified an Implementing Agency in their State/UT which liaises with the CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. to ensure that targets of the scheme are achieved in a time bound manner. Jharkhand Agency for Promotion of Information Technology (JAPIT) is the State Implementing Agency appointed in Jharkhand. JAPIT played an integral role in the implementation of the PMGDISHA scheme in Jharkhand by coordinating with various agencies to ensure smooth implementation of the scheme.

The Chief Secretary of Jharkhand has provided great support and inspiration in the process of implementing the scheme. Meetings are held on a monthly basis via Video Conference wherein the performance of districts in terms of registrations, training and certification of beneficiaries under the scheme is reviewed personally by the Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary has been extremely proactive in resolving all State level issues on timely basis.

Their unique implementation strategy has been documented and presented in the form of a booklet which has been circulated in all the other states.

Implication of SC judgment on Aadhaar

(Recommendation Sl. No. 14)

The Committee note that under the digital literacy scheme eKYC based authentication was used for beneficiary registration and at the time of assessment. Also, as per scheme guidelines, Aadhaar was being used to distinctly identify each beneficiary and to avoid duplicity. In the state of Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir which are still yet to be covered under Aadhaar, the Identity proofs such as NPR Card, Voter ID, Jan Dhan Yojana/Bank Passbook, State Permanent Resident Certificate issued by the SDM/DC office and any ID issued by Central/State Govt. which has photo as well as address are also considered. The Ministry have also informed that at present, the beneficiary identification is carried out using the demo authentication/Aadhaar Virtual ID facility provided by UIDAI. In the event of discontinuation of Aadhaar for beneficiary identification, there is a need to find an alternative low cost identification and authentication mechanism and to put sufficient safeguards in place to rule out any misuse/duplicity in identification of beneficiaries.

The Committee recommend that after the Supreme Court judgment on constitutional validity of Aadhaar, in the event of discontinuation of Aadhaar as the sole means identification of beneficiaries in digital literacy programs, the Ministry should be ready with alternate means of identification which can be used for beneficiary registration and assessment and which can effectively avoid duplicity.

Reply of the Government

As a consequence of the recent Supreme Court judgment on Aadhaar, beneficiary identification under PMGDISHA is being done using the Aadhaar number of the candidate. The demographic information of the Aadhaar number holder, obtained with his/her consent, is matched with the demographic information (Name, Gender, DOB etc) of the Aadhaar number holder in the Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR) to authenticate the beneficiary. In this process, the Ministry is using demo authentication for UIA verification and Aadhar data is not stored.

However, in the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir which are yet to be covered under Aadhaar, the Identity proofs such as NPR Card, Voter ID, Jan Dhan Yojana/Bank Passbook, State Permanent Resident Certificate issued by the SDM/DC office and any ID issued by Central/State Govt. which has photo as well as address can be considered. In case the need arises, the Ministry is prepared to use alternate means of identification for beneficiaries under the scheme.

Performance evaluation of schemes/beneficiaries

(Recommendation Sl. No. 15)

The Committee note that independent evaluation of the digital literacy programs NDLM/DISHA and PMGDISHA has been conducted by the third-party agencies namely IIT Delhi and Council for Social Development, Delhi, based on the criteria evolved by them. The Ministry further informed that after successful training of the candidate, a third party Assessment of the trained candidates is carried out through online remotely proctored examination conducted by nationally recognized Certifying Agencies namely National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu (ICTACT), Haryana Knowledge Corporation Limited (HKCL) and National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD). Payment of the training fee to the training partner/centre is made only after a candidate is found successful in the 3rd party assessment. The Committee find that in Digital Literacy programs/initiatives of the Government, much of the focus is on the numbers/quantitative parameters instead of the quality of training or the qualitative parameters. Under PMGDISHA scheme, wherein a total of 1.5 crore beneficiaries have been trained, independent evaluation by IIT Delhi covered a sample size of around 20,000 respondents which constitutes just about 0.13% of the total beneficiaries.

The Committee recommend that besides the focus on total number of beneficiaries, equal emphasis must be given to the evaluation of qualitative aspects of digital literacy programs. The Ministry may undertake regular independent third-party assessment of the scheme having adequate sample size to evaluate qualitative parameters of the training.

Reply of the Government

The impact assessment is conducted only for the certified candidates under the scheme. At the time of survey by IIT, around 65 lakh candidates were certified. Out of this, a sample of 20,000 was selected. As per methodology used by IIT Delhi, a sample size of 384 is adequate for a population of one million, with 95% confidence and 5% margin of error. The sample selected by them was greater than the recommended one.

Ministry is committed towards evaluating qualitative parameters of the training by regular independent third-party assessment of the scheme. A brief of the qualitative parameters attained after the PMGDISHA training is given below for reference:

S.No.	Parameter	Count
1	Online Transactions done	6,14,02,155
2	Digital Locker opened	44,71,035

Moreover, universities/ colleges would be engaged for carrying out Social Audit of the scheme through their students.

PMGDISHA - Awareness generation & CSR initiatives

(Recommendation Sl. No. 16)

The Committee note that several measures are being taken for increasing the awareness amongst general public about the PMGDISHA scheme such as creation of detailed portal for the Scheme i.e. www.pmgdisha.in for dissemination of information about the Scheme, conducting State/district/block level workshops across the country, training content made available in 22 scheduled languages and English, affiliation of Training centres in uncovered Gram Panchayats which would spread awareness about the Scheme amongst the rural citizens in their vicinity. Besides these measures other mechanisms include use of word of mouth publicity; online, print & electronic media including posters, banners, radio, newspaper, television, social media etc. and workshops, awareness campaigns in schools, local institutes and colleges etc. The Committee also note that several companies such as PayPal India Pvt Limited, McAfee, Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd and IndusInd Bank have been participating in CSR initiatives for training under PMGDISHA by the Ministry.

Keeping in view the importance of digital literacy in the flagship Digital India program of the Ministry, the Committee recommend that due importance may be given to publicity of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) to improve awareness about the scheme in the rural areas and to ensure that the scheme is able to achieve its intended target of making 6 crore persons in rural areas digitally literate by the end of March, 2019. While expressing satisfaction that the Ministry have taken some initiatives to involve local public representatives in digital literacy promotion drive, the Committee desire that they should continue to have their involvement in future also. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should make concerted efforts to increase participation of more corporate entities in CSR initiatives for training under PMGDISHA to contribute towards improving overall digital literacy in the country.

Reply of the Government

To create awareness about the scheme, the urban agglomerations in the country are covered under the CSR activities of Industries/Organisations using CSR funds. For such candidates, no training and certification fee are provided from the Scheme. Organisations such as PayPal India Pvt. Limited, McAfee, Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. and IndusInd Bank are already a part of the scheme.

Efforts are underway to engage different associations to support involvement of maximum number of persons under PMGDISHA. In this regard, organisations such as National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), *Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)* etc have aligned. with the implementing agency.

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE
REITERATION

(Recommendation Sl. No.3)

The Committee note that 'National Digital Literacy Mission' (NDLM) which was approved in March 2014 had a target to train 10 lakh citizens in select districts. It was closely followed by the 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) which was approved in December, 2014 with an additional target of 42.50 lakh candidates across the country. Both of these schemes were implemented concurrently across the country under which a total of 53.67 lakh beneficiaries were trained and duly certified. 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) was approved in February, 2017 to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019.

The Committee note that all the three digital literacy schemes of the Government aimed to cover a total of approximately 6.5 crore individuals. However, till October, 2018, they have managed to cover just about 2 crore individuals. As a percentage of total population of India, which stands at around 1.2 billion, the coverage of all the three digital literacy schemes is a miniscule 1.67 percent. The Committee are also concerned about very low achievement under these schemes in States/UTs viz. Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Goa, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya etc. Taking note of the low coverage of digital literacy schemes, the Committee recommend steps to scale up the coverage of digital literacy programs commensurate to the requirements of a population of more than 1.2 billion people. The criterion of covering only one person per household as it exists in the scheme seems too restrictive. In order to increase the coverage under PMGDISHA, the Ministry may consider changing the criteria and do away with the above restriction. The Ministry may also ensure adequate representation of disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) etc. under the schemes and apprise the Committee about the steps taken in this direction.

Reply of the Government

NDLM and DISHA schemes were concluded after achievement of their respective targets of training 10 Lakh and 42.5 Lakh candidates respectively.

So far, a total amount of Rs. 538 Crore has been released under the PMGDISHA Scheme as against the total fund requirements of Rs. 2351. 38 Crore. Till 12th April 2019, a total of 2.19 Crore candidates have been registered, 2.16 Crore candidates trained and more than 1.26 crore candidates have been certified.

As noted by the Committee, the progress of the schemes in certain north-eastern states and Union Territories has been observed to be slow due to various reasons such as poor internet connectivity; inaccessible training centres; low motivation among people.

In order to speed up the implementation of the scheme in NER and other states/UTS where

achievements are low efforts are being made to improve awareness about the scheme. Promotional activities such as media publicity, workshops, competitions among the community, etc. are being undertaken to cover various segments of the population in an inclusive manner. Special attention is also being given to NER region. The Implementing Agency has been advised to identify and affiliate training partners/centres in un-covered Gram Panchayats. The Ministry has sent communication to Chief Secretaries of the States to review and speed up implementation.

As regards to the criterion of covering one person from a household, it is stated that this criterion was kept in order to cover as many rural households as possible within the available budget for the scheme. Moreover, by providing digital literacy to one person from a household, the scheme intends to have a ripple effect on the family and community as a whole.

In an effort to bridge the digital divide and ensure adequate representation of disadvantaged groups, the scheme guidelines stipulate that preference would be given to Scheduled Castes (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST), Below Poverty Line (BPL), women, differently-abled persons and minorities.

So far under the Scheme 41,22,697 SC candidates, 19,98,775 ST candidates and also 1,08,73,186 women candidates have been trained under the PMGDISHA Scheme. Category specific viz. SC, ST, NER and General funds are being allocated under the Scheme to ensure adequate representation of disadvantages groups.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No. 7 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No.7)

The Committee are concerned to note that the Government had approved the scheme titled 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) in February, 2017 to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019. However, the achievement stands at a mere 1.45 crore as on 22nd October, 2018 which is just about 24% of the set target. Regarding the reasons for non-achievement of targets, the Ministry have informed that non-availability of Aadhar in NER States, non-availability of training centres/CSCs in some locations, lack of awareness among public, connectivity issues, infrastructure issues etc. continue to remain the challenge for the scheme. Now that only 24% have been achieved in two years, the chances of covering the remaining 4.5 crore rural households in a period of just five months seems quite bleak.

While expressing their concern on non-achievement of targets in the important PMGDISHA scheme, the Committee recommend that urgent measures should be taken up to address the challenges and speed up implementation of the scheme.

Reply of the Government

Due to paucity of funds, so far, an amount of Rs. 538 Crore could be released under the PMGDISHA Scheme, hence the targets envisaged under the Scheme could not be achieved. Regarding the states of Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu & Kashmir, which are yet to be covered under

Aadhaar, any Identity proof which has a photo as well as the address of the candidate, such as NPR Card, Voter ID, Jan Dhan Yojana/Bank Passbook, State Permanent Resident Certificate issued by the SDM/DC office and any ID issued by Central/State Government, is also considered to register as a beneficiary under PMGDISHA scheme.

In order to achieve the scheme targets, locations where CSCs are functioning well and have completed both training and examination under PMGDISHA, targets have been enhanced. *While in other states, alternative Training Centres are being given permission where ever the CSCs are facing problem in implementing the scheme.*

Efforts are being undertaken to increase awareness about the scheme through workshops, seminars, community engagement activities, media publicity, competitions and other activities by using e-learning, print and electronic media, etc. to cover various segments of the population in an all-inclusive manner.

The Ministry is now focusing on states where coverage is low. Special attention is given to NER region. Implementing agency has been advised to identify and affiliate training partners/centres in un-covered Gram Panchayats. Ministry has sent communication to Chief Secretary's of the states to review and speed up implementation. Further funds have been sought for timely achievement of envisaged targets.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No.11 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

When asked about the steps being taken/proposed to achieve the target of training 6 crore people under PMGDISHA by March 2019, the Ministry replied that the scheme was approved on 08.2.2017 at a total outlay of Rs. 2,351.38 Crore (approx.). An amount of Rs. 1175.69 crore was required during FY 2017-18 and a similar amount was required during FY 2018-19 for implementation of the Scheme. However, so far, a total amount of Rs. 500 crore has been allocated for the implementation of the scheme. Based on the availability of the funds, more than 1.60 crore candidates have been trained so far. In order to achieve the remaining target, the Ministry have requested for additional funds from Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance at RE stage and in the BE of next Financial Year.

Expressing hope that the Ministry would be able to turn around the low achievement and cover maximum target under the scheme, the Committee exhort the Ministry to seek additional funds from Ministry of Finance to ensure that the scheme can be sufficiently scaled up to achieve the target of covering 6 crore rural households (one person per household) by 31st March, 2019.

Reply of the Government

So far, an amount of Rs. 538 Crore has been released to CSC-SPV for implementation of the scheme. For FY 2019-20, Rs. 400 Crore has been allocated for the PMGDISHA scheme. The Ministry shall seek additional funds at RE stage so that the targets under the scheme can be achieved at the earliest.

The Ministry is confident that if sufficient funds are made available for the scheme this year, the uptake in the scheme can be scaled up through awareness sessions and training workshops to successfully achieve the remaining targets.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No.11 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No.10)

The Committee note that an individual can enrol under the PMGDISHA scheme by visiting a CSC/training centre in his/her vicinity. The eligibility criteria states that the candidate should be in the age group of 14 – 60 years, digitally illiterate and none of the family members of the candidate should be digitally literate. The above details of the beneficiary are counter verified through a Panchayat Functionary/Gazetted Officer/School Principal and thereafter, the candidates are registered on the Scheme Portal. After registration, unique Username and Password is provided to the beneficiary, which can be used to study the self learning e-modules through the LMS at the respective training center. In so far as the grievance redressal mechanism is concerned, they can be lodged at grievances@pmgdisha.in. Besides the email, other means to lodge a grievance includes telephone/mobile, social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter etc. and helpdesk teams at central and state level. The grievances are also received and resolved on Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) by the Ministry. The Ministry also informed that to obtain student feedback, a Rapid Assessment System (RAS) has been integrated with the scheme. It enables the candidates to share their experience of training, quality of trainer and satisfaction level by availing this service.

Keeping in view the fact that the enrolment procedure for PMGDISHA has an element of discretion owing to stipulated counter verification by Panchayat Functionary/Gazetted Officer/School Principal, the Committee recommend that there should be transparency in the enrolment procedure to prevent any misuse of the discretionary power. The scheme should also provide adequate means to the applicants to contest their rejection or to report any violation of the eligibility norms as prescribed under the scheme. The grievance redressal and feedback mechanism particularly with regard to fees, certification and enrollment etc. should be adequately strengthened to make the scheme equally accessible to all the beneficiaries and remove any element of discrimination.

Reply of the Government

During registration of candidates under the scheme, due measures are undertaken to ensure that only those candidates are registered who adhere to the eligibility criteria mentioned in the scheme guidelines. The Implementing Agency has ensured transparency with regard to scheme implementation through the following measures:

- All the relevant information related to scheme is made available on the web portal.

- For addressing the grievances of candidates, a grievance redressal form is available at <https://www.pmgdisha.in/grievance-redressal-form/>
- All the grievances received regarding the scheme are addressed by PMGDISHA Programme Management Unit (PMU) on a regular basis.
- Details of rejection of any Training Partner (TP)/ Centre are made available on the dashboard of the respective TP or CSC.
- There is a rating mechanism given to each beneficiary through their respective PMGDISHA dashboard which helps to them to share their rating about the training/ trainer.
- Grievances and queries of TP's/CSCs related to fee payment are addressed via email, helpline number and Helpdesk of the PMU on a regular basis.
- PMU representatives regularly visit the centers to examine all the parameters required for training centers and interact with the VLEs, trainers, candidates trained and certified and take action in case any malpractice found.
- The grievances by candidates regarding fees, certification and enrollment etc. are also received and resolved on Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) by the Ministry.

**Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No. 14 of Chapter-I)**

CHAPTER V

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF
WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE**

-NIL-

**New Delhi;
18 March , 2020
28 Phalguna, 1941(Saka)**

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Information Technology.**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2019-20)**

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 18 March, 2020 from 1500 hours to 1600 hours in Committee Room E, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Shashi Tharoor -Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Locket Chatterjee
3. Shri Karti P. Chidambaram
4. Dr. Nishikant Dubey
5. Choudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser
6. Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse
7. Dr. Sukanta Majumdar
8. Shri P. R. Natarajan
9. Shri Santosh Pandey
10. Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore
11. Shri Sanjay Seth
12. Shri L.S. Tejasvi Surya
13. Dr. T. Sumathy (A) Thamizhachi Thangapandian
14. Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma

Rajya Sabha

15. Dr. Anil Agrawal
16. Shri Y. S. Chowdary
17. Shri Suresh Gopi
18. Shri Md. Nadimul Haque
19. Shri Syed Nasir Hussain

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Ganapati Bhat | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Director |
| 3. | Dr. Sagarika Dash | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Smt. Geeta Parmar | - | Additional Director |
| 5. | Shri Shangreiso Zimik | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt three Draft Action Taken Reports relating to the Ministries/Departments under their jurisdiction.

3. The Committee, then, took up the following draft Report for consideration and adoption.

i. **** ** ;

ii. Draft Action Taken Report on 59th Report (16th Lok Sabha) on 'Review of National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)-Problems & Challenges' relating to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; and

iii. **** **

4. The Committee, thereafter, adopted the above Report with some modifications.

5. **** **

6. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to present the above Report to the House during the current Session of Parliament.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

*matters not related to the Report.

**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE
OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THEIR FIFTY-
NINTH REPORT
(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

[Vide Paragraph No. 5 of Introduction]

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government Rec. Sl. Nos.: 1,2,4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12,13,14,15 and 16	Total 12 Percentage 75.00
(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government Rec. Sl. No.: Nil	Total Nil Percentage 0.00
(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration Rec. Sl. Nos.: 3, 7, 8 and 10	Total 04 Percentage 25.00
(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the replies of the Government are of interim in nature Rec. Sl. No.: Nil	Total Nil Percentage 0.00