



Rural Digital Empowerment

Source: PIB

The [Universal Service Obligation Fund \(USOF\)](#), under the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, has signed a tripartite MoU with [Prasar Bharati](#) and [Open Network for Digital Commerce \(ONDC\)](#) to democratise digital services access in rural India.

- The tripartite MoU aims to expand **affordable and accessible digital services nationwide**, leveraging the BharatNet infrastructure under USOF.
- USOF's role in providing **high-speed broadband in Gram Panchayats and villages** will complement **Prasar Bharati's OTT platform**, offering linear channels, Live TV, and on-demand content.
- Prasar Bharati will **curate content for its OTT platform**, utilising its extensive legacy, consumer reach, and brand recognition.
- ONDC will **contribute technical expertise and infrastructure** for enabling digital commerce in various sectors, expanding beyond e-commerce to include education, health, finance, and agriculture.

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Organization	Establishment and Statutory Status	Purpose
Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)	Established in 2002 under Ministry of Communications; Statutory support under Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003	Ensure universal access to quality ICT services in rural and remote areas at efficient prices
Prasar Bharati	Established in 1997 under Prasar Bharati Act; Statutory autonomous body	Public Service Broadcaster of the country
Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)	Established in late 2021 under Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade; Part of Digital India initiative	Network of interconnected e-marketplaces facilitating direct sales from sellers to customers

Read more: [Universal Service Obligation Fund \(USOF\)](#), [Prasar Bharati](#), [ONDC and its Potential](#)

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