

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 871
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22ND DECEMBER, 2017**

REQUISITE SPECTRUM FOR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

871. SHRI K. T. S. TULSI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the country has requisite spectrum and wired connectivity to support the Government initiatives like Digital India; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by Government, if any, in this regard, before the launch of Digital India programme?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) & (b) Yes Sir. Department has conducted spectrum auction every year from 2012 onwards in various spectrum bands as per availability. In the last spectrum auction conducted in October 2016, spectrum was put to auction in 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz bands. Out of a total of 2354.75 MHz spectrum put to auction in 22 Licensed Service Areas (LSAs), 964.80 MHz of spectrum in various bands was sold. Further, the Government has already sought recommendations from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on the applicable Reserve Price and related issues for auction of right to use of spectrum above 3000 MHz (3300-3400 MHz and 3400-3600 MHz) besides frequency bands 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz. Recommendations from TRAI are awaited.

In addition to above, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and some of the private telecom operators are also providing telecom services through wireline in the country.

As per the data published by Telecom regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the total telephone subscribers (Wireless and Wireline) and Broadband subscribers in the country were 1201.72 million and 340.16 million respectively by October 31, 2017.

Action Taken Report (November 2017) on various component of Digital India Programme is at **Annexure-I**.

Action Taken Report (November, 2017) on various components of Digital India Programme (Related to DoT)

Sr. No.	Action Points	Target	Status of progress
1(a)	Broadband Highways: Broadband for all Rural	2,50,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) to be provided with broadband facility in phased manner, as under: - (i). 1 lakh GPs by November, 2017 (ii). Balance 1.5 lakh GPs by March, 2019 (iii). District to Block and Block to GPs ring connectivity by 2023	<p>Status of National Optical Fibre Project(NOFN)/Bharat Net: -</p> <p>As on 3rd December, 2017, the status of the BharatNet project is as under: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of GPs where OFC laying completed: 1,05,274 • No. of GPs ready for services: 81,535 • Length of OFC laid: 2,46,161 Kms
1(b)	Broadband Highways: Broadband for all Urban	Changes in Rules to facilitate Virtual Network Operator and communication infrastructure in new urban development and buildings	<p>Streamlining Right of Way (RoW)</p> <p>The Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 have been notified in the Gazette of India Extraordinary and the notified rules have been laid on the Tables of both Houses of the Parliament.</p> <p>Introduction of VNO Guidelines for grant of unified licence (Virtual Network Operators) have been issued on 31st May, 2016.</p> <p>Spectrum Management The Government of India has approved Sharing of Spectrum and Trading of Spectrum. The detailed guidelines for the sharing of spectrum and the trading of spectrum have been issued on 24th September, 2015 and 12th October, 2015 respectively.</p> <p>Convergence of Cable TV network for providing broadband services</p>

			<p>An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary was constituted to take a view on convergence of Cable TV network for providing broadband services. In pursuance of the decision taken the IMC, an Inter-Ministerial Sub-Committee was constituted by DoT comprising Joint Secretary level representatives from DoT, DeitY (Now MeitY), Mol&B and TRAI to study the issues involved in broadband through cable TV network, analyze and make recommendations for the way forward. The sub-committee submitted its report on “Broadband through Cable TV Network” on 04.01.2017. The report was forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat. Further, a meeting on the issue was taken by the Principle Secretary to Prime Minister on 11th April, 2017 and based on the minutes of the meeting, two separate committees have been formed by DoT to examine the issues of (i) Delivering broadband through cable network in India; & (ii) Recommendations of TRAI on exemption of the license fee earned on fixed line broadband for 5 years.</p>
2	<p>Universal Access to Phones (a) Universal Access to mobile connectivity</p>	<p>Covering remaining uncovered village</p>	<p>1. Rural Tele-density 56.71% (as on 30th September, 2017)</p> <p>2. Out of total 5, 97, 608 villages in the country, only 52,685 villages are not having coverage with mobile services. Various measures/schemes undertaken by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to expand and improve telecommunications services in rural and remote areas are as under:</p> <p>(i) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER):</p> <p>a) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (except Arunachal Pradesh and 2 districts of Assam): The Telecom Commission has approved the tender for mobile services in uncovered villages of North Eastern Region [at market discovered subsidy through tender process by USOF] in respect of 11 bidding units of Assam-A, Assam-B, Assam-C, Assam-D, Sikkim,</p>

		<p>Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur-A, Manipur-B and Arunachal Pradesh at a total estimated USOF subsidy outgo of Rs.1656 crore. Telecom Commission has approved installation of 1694 mobile towers to cover 2128 uncovered villages of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura and 310 towers along National Highways.</p> <p>b) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Arunachal Pradesh and 2 districts of Assam (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao): The Telecom Commission has approved the BSNL tender for provision of mobile services in uncovered villages of Arunachal Pradesh and two districts of Assam at market discovered cost through tender process with the total project cost of Rs. 2258 crore.</p> <p>(ii) Mobile Communication Services in LWE affected areas: As on 30.11.2017, 2187 mobile towers out of 2199 are operational. The project (Phase-I) has been completed.</p> <p>(iii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands: The Telecom Commission has given final approval for the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan including provision of mobile connectivity for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands, consisting the following components, -</p> <p>a) Provision of 2G (voice) mobile coverage in uncovered villages in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI) and Lakshadweep: Telecom Commission in its meeting held on 14.12.2016 has approved the proposal to cover 172 uncovered villages in ANI at a total estimated project cost of Rs. 221.92 crores to be funded from USOF. Work has to be awarded through competitive bidding basis. 151 towers are proposed to cover 172 uncovered villages with population more than 10. The project is targeted to be completed by Dec 2018. The Telecom Commission in the same meeting has also approved the proposal for augmentation of 2G mobile services with EDGE technology in Lakshadweep Islands by BSNL at an estimated cost of Rs. 10.1 crores</p>
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		<p>towards CAPEX, to be funded by USOF. The project is targeted to be completed by December, 2017.</p> <p>b) Provision of Seamless 2G (voice) mobile connectivity along the National Highway 223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Telecom Commission in its meeting held on 14.12.2016 has approved the proposal to cover entire 129 km of uncovered NH223 including 80 km falling within Jarawa Tribal Reserve Belt in ANI at a total estimated project cost of Rs. 40.99 crores to be funded from USOF. Work has to be awarded through competitive bidding basis. 28 towers proposed for seamless coverage of NH223. The project is targeted to be completed by Dec 2018.</p> <p>c) Augmentation of OFC network in Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Telecom Commission on 14.12.2016 has approved the proposal for augmentation of OFC network in Andaman & Nicobar Islands at an estimated cost limited to Rs. 35.35 crores towards CAPEX, to be funded by USOF. It will enhance the capacity of the network and providing OFC in ring configuration for providing redundancy in the land OFC network. The work has already been started. Project is targeted to be implemented by March 2018.</p> <p>d) Augmentation of satellite connectivity/ bandwidth in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep: In ANI, the project has been completed and 1151 Mbps satellite bandwidth has been achieved. In Lakshadweep, the Note has been approved by Telecom Commission to enhance the bandwidth capacity from the existing 102 Mbps to 318 Mbps. The bandwidth capacity at present is 274 Mbps. The project is targeted to be completed by December, 2017.</p> <p>3. The Department of Telecommunication has initiated an exercise to ground proof the data obtained from the Telecom Service Providers. The Department has developed a user friendly web portal with URL(https://202.56.229.46/TSP_DOT/login.aspx) to enable Block Development Officers</p>
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			(BDOs) upload the status of connectivity of villages. The Department provides unique password to each BDO for accessing the portal and uploading the status of connectivity of villages, falling within the jurisdiction of the Block. Once all the data are uploaded on the portal, it would be analysed to find the exact number of the uncovered villages in the country. After receiving the data of inhabited villages, DPR would be prepared and approval of competent authority would be taken to provide mobile services to these uncovered villages.
3	IT for Jobs Telecom Service providers to train rural workforce to cater to their own needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All Telecom Service Providers have been requested to take necessary action to tie up with local Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and provide training to students as per their own needs. ➤ The Telecom Sector Skill Council (TSSC), a non-profit organisation constituted jointly by COAI, ICA and TCOE in January, 2013 has empanelled 157 training partners across the country and enrolled 2,12,165 persons for training so far.
4	Early Harvest Programmes: Public Wi-Fi hotspots	Covering cities with population > 1 million/ Tourist Centres	Out of 100 tourist sites identified by the GoI, wi-fi facility has already been provided at 90 sites.
