GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 248
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11TH AUGUST, 2023

REFORMS IN TELECOM SECTOR

248 # SMT. DARSHANA SINGH:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a)   whether it is a fact that Government is considering further reforms in the telecom sector;

(b)   whether it is also a fact that Government is inviting recommendations from industry on various issues including improving quality of services, bridging digital divide and ensuring security of telecom networks;

(c)   whether telecommunication facilities are not available in some villages of the country, especially in remote areas; and

(d)   if so, the steps being taken by Government to provide telecom facilities in all villages of the country as well as the steps proposed to be taken for improvement in quality of telecom services?

ANSWER

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

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

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF RAJYA SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) to (d) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 248 FOR 11TH AUGUST, 2023 REGARDING "REFORMS IN TELECOM SECTOR".

(a) & (b)   Government is committed to bring reforms in telecom sector and has brought various reforms in past 9 years.

(1)   These telecom reforms have led to exponential growth of telecom sector, improved quality of services, bridging of digital divide, safety of the users and security of the telecommunication networks in past 9 years as indicated below:

S.No.	Parameters	As on 31.03.2014	As on 31.03.2023
(i)	Mobile Subscribers (in crores)	90.45	114.39
(ii)	Mobile Broadband Subscribers (in crores)	4.56	81.20
(iii)	No of Mobile towers (in lakhs)	4.0	9.9
(iv)	Number of Base Transreceiver Stations (BTS) [in lakhs]	6.49	25.42
(v)	Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) laid [in lakh kms]	11.05	38.06
(vi)	Mobile Data Tariff (in ₹/ GB)	269	10.1
(vii)	Data Usage per mobile subscriber per month (in GB)	0.27	17.11

(2)   Further, the Government has simplified Standing Advisory Committee on Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance for telecom towers which has resulted in instantaneous SACFA clearances in 85% applications.

(3)   The Government has also released National Frequency Allocation Plan 2022, which will guide the users of the spectrum to plan their networks in accordance with relevant frequency and parameters provided therein.

(4)   Exemplifying the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects under PM Gati Shakti, the Call Before You Dig (CBuD) app was launched on 22.03.2023 for preventing damage to underlying assets like optical fibre cables, through a 'Whole-of-Government approach' benefitting all stakeholders by improving ease of doing business and minimizing discomfort to the citizens.

(5)   With an aim to achieve Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business, Government has removed or reduced 107-compliance burden as on date by simplifying Government to Citizen and Government to Business interface.

(6)   "Gati Shakti Sanchar" portal launched on 14.05.2022 to streamline the process of Right of Way (RoW) applications and permissions of establishing telecom infrastructure across the country. This has resulted in the fastest 5G rollout in the world covering 717

districts with installation of more than 3.15 lakhs 5G Base Transreceiver Stations (BTS) in just 10 months.

(7)   The Government has launched Sanchar Saathi portal on 16.05.2023, a major reform towards the safety and security of users, which includes Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) module for tracing, blocking stolen/lost mobiles, Telecom Analytics for Fraud Management and Consumer Protection (TAFCOP) module which enables subscriber to know mobile connections registered in his/her name, Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification (ASTR) module to identify fraudulent subscribers. By using Sanchar Saathi portal, more than 50 Lakh fraudulent connections have been disconnected so far.

(8)   To improve the mobile coverage in border villages, the RoW permissions for the installation of Base Transreceiver stations (BTSs) have been facilitated in border area.

Further, the Government is regularly consulting with all the stakeholders including different industry associations, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) etc. to bring and implement the reforms in telecom sector for overall growth of sector.

 (c) & (d)   Government is implementing various schemes to provide the telecom coverage to all uncovered 38,901 villages at an outlay of more than ₹ 41000 crores. Bharat Net scope recently expanded to cover all the inhabited villages at an outlay of ₹ 1.39 lakhs crores.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) monitors the performance of service providers against the benchmark for various Quality of Service (QoS) parameters by way of Quality of Service regulations issued from time to time. The Government has also requested the TRAI to review the existing QoS Regulations and incorporate more stringent parameters/benchmarks to improve the present QoS significantly.

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