GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 707
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8TH DECEMBER, 2023

HIGH SPEED INTERNET FACILITY

707 # Shri Neeraj Dangi:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agencies and service providers providing high speed internet connections in rural areas of the country, especially in the state of Rajasthan;

(b) the details of the efforts being made to accelerate the work of providing internet facilities in various States and districts of the country;

(c) the details of the States and districts in the country where there is very little or no access to internet facilities;

(d) reasons for non availability of high speed internet services in rural and backward areas of the country; and

(e) remedial steps taken by Government in this regard so far?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)

(a) to (e) Telecom connectivity in Rajasthan has improved significantly in last 10 years. The number of Base Trans-receivers Stations (BTSs) have increased from 30,963 in March, 2014 to 1,59,399 in November, 2023. The number of internet subscriber have increased from around 1.25 Crore (Cr) in March, 2014 to around 5.06 Cr in September, 2023. The number of wireless subscribers have increased from around 5.27 Cr in March 2014 to around 6.38 Cr in June, 2023. The number of towers have increased from 17,592 in December, 2015 to 42,926 in November, 2023. Also, as against 69,260 Kilometre (Km) optical fiber laid till the year 2014, 2,19,404 Km optical fiber have been laid till September, 2023 in Rajasthan. As in November, 2023, 22,875 number of 5G BTSs have been installed in Rajasthan.

A total of 292 Access and Internet Service License have been given to provide connectivity in Districts/ State of Rajasthan. List of Access and Internet Service Licensees are available on the departmental website at https://dot.gov.in/data-services/2574 and https://dot.gov.in/unified-licencing.

Government has taken multiple steps to accelerate the work of providing internet facilities in various States and districts of the country which include:

(I) The growth in the Telecom sector has happened due to various structural and procedural reforms implemented by the government in last few years to promote healthy competition, infuse

liquidity, encourage investment, reduce regulatory burden on Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) and protect interests of consumers. These are as follows:

(i) Rationalization of definition of Adjusted Gross Revenue.

(ii) Spectrum Reforms like allowing sharing, trading of spectrum and rationalization of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC).

(iii) Incentivising Spectrum Sharing.

(iv) Ensuring adequate spectrum availability through open and transparent auction.

(v) Permission for 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in telecom sector under automatic route subject to safeguards.

(vi) Launch of PM Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal for faster Right of Way (RoW) approvals.

(vii) Issuance of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules 2016 and amendment rules from time to time for faster and easier rollout of telecom infrastructure.

(viii) Procedure for Standing Advisory Committee for Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance for telecom towers eased significantly.

As a result, number of Base Trans-receivers Stations (BTSs) have increased from 6.49 lakhs in March, 2014 to 25.42 lakhs in March, 2023. The number of internet users have increased from 25.15 crore in March, 2014 to around 91.82 crore in September, 2023. The cost of data has reduced drastically from Rupees 269 per Giga Byte (GB) in March 2014 to Rupees (Rs) 9.94 per GB in March 2023. India has seen the fastest rollout of 5G services in the world with 3.99 lakhs Base Trans-receivers Stations (BTSs) deployed across 738 districts. Median speed for mobile broadband has also improved from 1.30 Megabits per second (Mbps) in March 2014 to 75.80 Mbps in October, 2023.

(II) In addition to the above:

- BharatNet project is being implemented, using Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. As on 13.11.2023, a total of 2,07,346 Gram Panchayats have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country. Further, on 04.08.2023, the Union Cabinet has approved the Amended BharatNet Program for extending the scope of BharatNet beyond Gram Panchayats (GPs) to all inhabited villages.

- Various projects including Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region, Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands and Mobile connectivity projects are implemented under USOF for connectivity of Rural and Remote areas of the country including Aspirational Districts, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) area, Border Areas and other unconnected/ underserved areas.

- The project for saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the country at a total cost of Rs. 26,316 Cr. for providing 4G mobile services in uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas of the country is under implementation.

- Government of India has launched a Scheme for the year 2022-23 named as "Scheme for Special Assistance to states for Capital Investment 2022-23". The support has been made available to states for capital projects on Optical fibre Cable and approval has been given for projects amounting Rs 2716 crores in respect of 24 states.

- Rs 19,000 Crore has been disbursed during last three years (2020-21 to 2022-23 under various USOF Projects to improve Telecom Services/ Internet Services in Rural/ Remote/ Uncovered areas of the country.

- As on 24-11-2023, 5G mobile networks have been rolled out in 738 districts across the country including in 33 districts of Rajasthan. Approximately 100 million mobile subscribers have started using 5G services in the country.

- Other salient efforts include availability of sufficient spectrum, reforms regarding spectrum usage charges, spectrum harmonization, reforms in respect of clearances for mobile towers, expedite Right of Way permissions, etc.

All States and Districts in the Country have mobile internet coverage, except for some villages which are being covered under various USOF schemes as described above.

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