

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 658
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05TH FEBRUARY, 2026**

NDCP IN PUNJAB AND GUJARAT

**658 DR. VIKRAMJIT SINGH SAHNEY:
SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI:**

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to implement National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) in Punjab and Gujarat;
- (b) the current status of its implementation in those States, including the key targets achieved, such as broadband penetration, infrastructure development and connectivity in urban and rural areas;
- (c) the funds allocated and utilized therefor and the details of future funding plans; and
- (d) the initiatives taken to ensure that NDCP's goals of providing high-speed internet, increasing broadband penetration and fostering innovation are met in those States, particularly in remote and underserved regions?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) to (d) The National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP)-2018 was launched by the Government of India in the year 2018 with a vision to fulfil the information and communication needs of citizens and enterprises through the establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient, secure, accessible and affordable Digital Communications Infrastructure throughout India. National Digital Communications Policy– 2018 is not a scheme, but a policy document, which does not has a separate sanctioned head under budget.

Some of the key steps and initiatives taken by the government towards the implementation of the NDCP- 2018 are as below:

- Telecom coverage to uncovered villages, especially in remote and challenging terrains by Digital Bharat Nidhi;
- Enactment of The Telecommunications Act 2023 on 24th December, 2023;
- Rationalization of definition of adjusted gross revenue;
- Allowing spectrum trading/sharing;
- Incentivizing spectrum sharing;
- Ensuring adequate spectrum through open and transparent auction;
- Permission for 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in telecom sector under automatic route subject to safeguards;
- Launch of Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal for centralized Right of Way (RoW) approvals;

- To facilitate faster and easier deployment of telecom infrastructure, the Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024 has been notified on 17th September, 2024 and has come into effect on 01st January, 2025;
- Simplification of Standing Advisory Committee for Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance process for installing telecom towers;
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme to facilitate investment in the manufacturing of telecom equipment and reduce import dependency of the telecom industry;
- Establishment of Public Wi-Fi hotspots;
- Launch of 5G on 1st October, 2022 for improving the network speed and latency, etc.;
- As of December 2025, ₹ 23.09 crore and ₹ 350.62 crore have been disbursed under 4G Saturation Project in Punjab and Gujarat, respectively.
- As of December 2025, ₹ 1,692.80 crore and ₹ 3,958.47 crore have been disbursed under BharatNet Project in Punjab and Gujarat, respectively.

The implementation of NDCP-2018 over the last six years has improved telecom infrastructure, expanded the coverage and affordability of telecom services throughout India, including Punjab and Gujarat. The details of development in respect of telecom infrastructure, affordability of broadband, coverage, etc. in India including Punjab and Gujarat are as below:

- The optical fiber cable (OFC) network in India expanded from 17.5 lakh km in March 2018 to 42.53 lakh km in December 2025. During the same period, the OFC network in Punjab increased from 0.61 lakh km to 1.97 lakh km, while Gujarat recorded an expansion from 0.99 lakh km to 2.90 lakh km.
- The number of Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) in the country increased from 17.3 lakh in March 2018 to 31.86 lakh in December 2025, out of which 5.19 lakh are 5G BTSs.
- In the State of Punjab, the number of BTSs rose from 0.77 lakh in March 2018 to 1.02 lakh in December 2025, out of which 0.18 lakh are 5G BTSs.
- Similarly, in the State of Gujarat, the number of BTSs increased from 1.08 lakh in March 2018 to 1.94 lakh in December 2025, out of which 0.35 lakh are 5G BTSs.
- As of December 2025, out of 6,44,131 villages in the country (village data as per Registrar General of India), 6,34,955 villages are covered with mobile connectivity whereas in Punjab out of 12,534 villages, 12,532 villages while in Gujarat, out of 18,425 villages, 18,211 villages are covered with mobile connectivity;
- The number of broadband subscribers in India has increased from 48 Crore in September 2018 to 99.5 Crore in September 2025 whereas in Punjab Licensed Service Area, it has increased from 1.9 crore in September 2018 to 2.9 Crore in September 2025 while in Gujarat it has increased from 3.2 crore in September 2018 to 5.8 crore in September 2025.
- As of 28.01.2026, a total of 4,06,874 Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed across India. Of these, 3,713 public Wi-Fi hotspots are in Punjab, while 11,857 public Wi-Fi hotspots are in Gujarat.
- The data usage in India has increased from 8.32 GB per month in September 2018 to 25.24 GB per month in September 2025;
- The average tariff per GB for wireless data in India has decreased from ₹10.91 in September 2018 to ₹8.27 in September 2025.
