

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1309
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25th JULY, 2018**

PUBLIC DATA OFFICES

1309. DR. KAMBHAMPATI HARIBABU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the targets under the BharatNet project have been revised and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) the role of the Public Data Offices (PDO) to be setup under the BharatNet project along with the mechanism for operation, control and regulation of Public Data Office Aggregators; and
- (c) the details of skill development initiatives, if any, for enhanced employability of youth in the upcoming digital communication revolution as envisaged under draft telecom policy?

ANSWER

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

(a) The design, strategy to implement and target of BharatNet has been modified in order to align it with the vision of Digital India, on July 19, 2017. The Cabinet approved a modified strategy for implementing BharatNet in three Phases:

- Phase I - Connecting 1,00,000 Gram Panchayats(GPs) with high speed Broadband which is already completed in December 2017 and executed by 3 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) viz. BSNL, RailTel and PGCIL.
- Phase II - The remaining 1,50,000 GPs (approx.) are targeted to be implemented by March 2019.
- Phase III - To upgrade the network to meet the future requirements.

Government has approved the project at a total estimated cost of Rs. 42,068 Crore (exclusive of GST, octroi and local taxes) which includes Rs. 11,148 Crore for Phase-I and Rs. 30,920 crore for Phase-II and other activities, to be funded from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

In Phase-II, the modified strategy includes laying of Fibre from Block to Gram Panchayats instead of laying fibre from Fibre Point of Interconnect (FPOI) to GPs. Thus, the use of new fibre from Block to GPs would make the network more stable and also enhance the quality of service. The implementation of the Phase-II is being done through States and private sector, in addition to CPSEs. The connectivity is to be provided through an optimal mix of underground/ aerial OFC, radio and satellite media. Further, last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided to cover all the approx. 2,50,000 GPs in the country.

(b) At present, there is no provision to set up Public Data Offices (PDO) under the BharatNet project.

(c) One of the goals of the proposed National Digital Communications Policy-2018 is to train /re-skill 1 million manpower for building New Age Skills by building human resource capital to facilitate employment opportunities in Digital Communication Sector through the following strategies:

- Building national capacity and institutional capabilities in telecom security tools, standards and forensics including in manufacturing of critical telecom equipment.
- Creating educational resources relating to the communications sector and making them available in open and accessible format to promote self-directed and collaborative learning through interactive formats, including audio, video and text.
