

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3595
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8TH AUGUST, 2018**

MOBILE TOWERS IN INACCESSIBLE AREAS

†3595. SHRI KAMALBHAN SINGH MARABI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the norms laid down by the Government for installation of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) towers in villages located in remote/inaccessible areas especially in hilly regions;
- (b) whether population of villages is the basis for the said norms and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to implement any scheme to address the problems being faced by the residents of naxal affected and farflung villages who do not have access to phone facilities;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) & (b) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), based on technical feasibility and commercial viability sets up Base Transceiver Stations (BTSS). While installing BTS, BSNL gives priority to villages having population of more than 5000.
- (c) to (e) Schemes funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for building telecom connectivity in naxal affected and remote villages, are as follows:
 - (i) Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas: Cabinet on 23.05.2018 has approved a project proposal for providing the mobile services in inhabited and uncovered villages of the LWE areas in 4072 tower locations under LWE Phase-II project with timeline of 18 months from the date of signing the agreement with the implementing agency. Implementation of the project has been initiated.

- (ii) Uncovered Villages: Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is in the process of identification of uncovered villages in the country to provide mobile coverage in inhabited and uncovered villages in a phased manner subject to availability of funds/resources.
- (iii) Andaman and Nicobar Islands: Project for provisioning of mobile services (2G and 4G) to uncovered villages and seamless coverage on NH223 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been formulated. The project will be rolled out within 12 months from the date of signing the agreement.
- (iv) North Eastern Region (NER): Following measures have been taken for expansion of mobile coverage in NER:
 - Under Comprehensive Telecom Development for NER, USOF has signed an agreement with BSNL to install 2817 mobile towers for providing mobile coverage in 4119 uncovered villages of Arunachal Pradesh and two districts of Assam.
 - USOF signed agreement with M/s Bharti Airtel Limited and M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited to install 2004 mobile towers for providing mobile coverage in 2128 villages and National Highways in NER (except Meghalaya).
 - On 23.05.2018, Cabinet has approved revised proposal for provision of mobile services on 2G+4G technology for installation of 2173 mobile towers in 2374 uncovered villages and along National Highways in Meghalaya.
- (v) BharatNet: BharatNet is being implemented to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayat by laying Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) or any other suitable media. This network is national asset to be provided to service providers on non-discriminatory basis. Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are identifying locations to set up their infrastructure, in order to leverage BharatNet to provide telecom services.
