LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 21
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12th DECEMBER, 2018

BHARAT NET PROJECT

*21.   SHRIMATI VASANTHI M.:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether it is a fact that the Bharat Net Project seeks to connect 2.5 lakh gram panchayats in the country through high speed broadband by March, 2019 and if so, the details thereof;

(b)   whether the Government has instructed both Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) to submit reports on every day basis on the progress made in the Bharat Net Project and if so, the details thereof;

(c)   whether it is true that there is a shirking of responsibility along with inability to resolve on-field problems and inter organisational issues between BBNL and BSNL, if so, the details thereof; and

(d)   whether it is also a fact that this is not only hampering progress of this vital project but is now threatening to derail even earlier achievement of the past four years and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

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

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *21 FOR 12TH DECEMBER, 2018 ON "BHARAT NET PROJECT".

(a)

i. BharatNet is being implemented in a phased manner to provide high speed broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country. BharatNet Phase I to connect 1,00,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) has been completed in December 2017. The project is a national asset and middle layer of the communications network. Service Providers and the States are to utilize the network to provide services. All Service Providers are to be provided non-discriminatory access to the network.

ii. On 19.07.2017, a modified strategy for implementing BharatNet has been approved by the Union Cabinet. Under this strategy, the remaining 1,50,000 (approx.) Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be provided with broadband connectivity in Phase-II of the project. The total cost of BharatNet approved by the Cabinet is Rs. 42,068 crore. The Phase II implementation is by connecting GPs through an optimal mix of media (i.e. OFC, radio and satellite) and by the three models of implementation; i.e. State-led model, Private Sector, CPSU model. New OFC is to be laid from Block to GPs.

iii. The Phase-II of the project is under implementation, mainly through Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode of implementation, where life-time maintenance of the BharatNet infrastructure is to be done by the Implementing Agencies. The project is being implemented by three models of implementation; 8 States covering 61,492 GPs are implementing the project under State-led model; about 6500 GPs in NER, J&K etc. are being connected by Satellite; and 7494 GPs in two States are being implemented by BBNL through EPC contractors. For the remaining GPs, CPSUs BSNL & PGCIL have been assigned the work of implementation of the project.

iv. As on 02.12.2018, a total of 3,01,154 Km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid connecting 1,21,652 GPs by OFC, of which 1,16,411 GPs are service ready.

(b) to (d)   No, Madam. The Department of Telecommunications is taking necessary steps, along with BBNL and BSNL, to ensure effective maintenance and utilization of the BharatNet infrastructure.

i. Network Operating Centre (NOC) is set up to monitor the operation of the network and the project is presently in implementation phase. To monitor connectivity daily, NOC reports are being sought from BSNL & BBNL. The progress is being monitored on a regular basis.

ii. To ensure better utilization of BharatNet, a Wi-Fi network is being set up under the project. On an average, 3 Government Institutions at GP level such as Police Station, Post Office, School, Hospital and citizens at GP are being connected and average 5 Wi-Fi Access Points (AP) are being set up at each GP.

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