

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2360  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2018**

**RURAL TELEPHONE DENSITY**

†2360. SHRI SADASHIV LOKHANDE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken any steps to bring rural telephone density at par with urban areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received any recommendations from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for overhauling the existing telecom policy for enabling rapid expansion of telecom services in villages;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken any steps for implementing the said recommendations 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) & (b) Government has taken following steps to improve rural telephone density.
- (1) Provision of mobile connectivity in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas:
  - (i) LWE Phase-I project by providing mobile connectivity through 2341 mobile towers.
  - (ii) LWE Phase-II project being planned for providing mobile connectivity at 4072 MHA locations.
- (2) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for mobile connectivity in North Eastern Region (NER) to install 6673 mobile towers for 8621 identified uncovered villages, 321 mobile towers for National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the region.
- (3) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Andaman & Nicobar Islands:
  - (i) Submarine Optical Fibre Cable connectivity between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar.

- (ii) Satellite Bandwidth Augmentation for Andaman & Nicobar from 260 Mbps to 2 Gbps and augmentation of Intra Island OFC network in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- (iii) Mobile connectivity in Andaman & Nicobar Islands to cover uncovered villages and seamless coverage on National Highway (NH 223).
- (4) Lakshadweep: Augmentation of Satellite bandwidth from 102 Mbps to 1.71 Gbps.
- (5) BharatNet Project: BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats (approx 2.5 lakh) by broadband in the country. This project is under implementation and the infrastructure created will be a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers. As on 16.12.2018, by laying 3,03,560 Km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), OFC laying and equipment installation has been completed at 1,16,543 Gram Panchayats, which are service ready.

(c) to (e) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had submitted their input for formulation of National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) – 2018) which, inter-alia, included inputs for enabling expansion of telecom services in villages. Based on the inputs from TRAI and other stakeholders, NDCCP-2018 has been notified in the Gazette of India dated 22.10.2018 with a vision to support India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society by fulfilling the information and communications needs of citizens and enterprises by establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient and affordable Digital Communications Infrastructure and Services.

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