

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2688
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH DECEMBER, 2019**

DELAY IN COMPLETION OF BHARATNET PROJECT

2688. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of times deadlines for BharatNet Project have been extended along with the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the phase II of the project was to be completed by 31st December, 2018 and if so, the details thereof and the projected cost-overruns due to delay, if any, in the completion of the said phase;
- (c) whether the Government has asked the Chief Managing Director (CMD) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) about the reason for the reported non-functionality of connectivity in 80 to 90 per cent of Gram Panchayat across the country and if so, the details thereof and the response received by the Government thereon;
- (d) whether there is a correlation between internet usage and GDP per capita and if so, the details thereof, and the total economic loss suffered by the country due to delay in operationalisation of BharatNet projects, alongwith the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) whether some officials of Department of Telecommunication (DoT) were transferred between 01.11.2018 and 14.11.2018 because of poor operations of BharatNet infrastructure and if so, the details thereof and the other steps taken against erring officials; and
- (f) whether there are discrepancies found by the Government in procurement of faulty hardware installed by BSNL and if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, LAW & JUSTICE AND
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

(a) & (b) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. In December 2017, the Phase-I of the BharatNet project was completed by connecting one lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs). A modified strategy to implement BharatNet has been approved by Cabinet on 19.07.2017, which inter alia included the estimated project cost as Rs 42,068 crore and targeted the completion of the project by March 2019.

The BharatNet project is under implementation, and as on 22.11.2019, by laying 3,85,754 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), a total of 1,42,086 GPs have been connected and out of them, 1,28,990 have been made Service Ready. In addition, 983 GPs have been made Service Ready over satellite media. A total of 2 lakh GPs are targeted to be completed by March 2020.

Implementation of BharatNet is very challenging as the project is of mega nature and the GPs are widely dispersed across the country in rural and remote areas. All out efforts are being made to expeditiously implement the project.

As of now, no approval has been taken from the Cabinet for upward revision of the project cost for implementation of the BharatNet.

(c) As the BharatNet project is monitored by the Department of Telecommunications, letters have been written to the CMD, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and CMD, Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) regarding BharatNet Operations & Management and other related issues.

The following steps have been taken for providing stable broadband connectivity from the BharatNet network in Country:

- Network is being monitored through Network Operating Centre (NOC) and its reports are being monitored on a regular basis.
- The Digital Communications Commission (DCC) on 13.06.2019 has approved to award the work of maintenance (i.e. O&M of incremental Optical Fibre Cable network and First Line Maintenance of equipment and supporting infrastructure) in each of about 1.25 lakh GPs of the BharatNet Phase-I, to CSC e-Governance Services India Limited.
- The Operations & Maintenance (O&M) of BharatNet Phase-II network, is to be carried out mainly through the respective Project Implementation Agencies (PIA).

(d) As per the TRAI Recommendations on “Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks” dated 09.03.2017, the World Bank’s World Development Report observed that on an average a 10% increase in internet penetration, is likely to lead to a 1.4% growth in the GDP of an economy. However, the total calculation of the economic loss, suffered by the country due to delay in operationalisation of BharatNet project, seems to be presumptive in nature.

For expediting the implementation and operationalisation of the project, the following committees have been constituted for timely resolution of the issues:

- i) Empowered Committee under Secretary, DoT.
 - ii) Steering Committee under Administrator, USOF.
 - iii) State Level Implementation Committee chaired by Chief Secretary of the State would be set up which would have DoT/USOF/BBNL designated officials as its members.
- (e) The transfer and posting of officers is a routine administrative matter in the Department.
- (f) As per the information received from BBNL, there is no such report.
