

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1541  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

**SHORTAGE OF MOBILE TOWER**

†1541. SHRIMATI RANJEETA KOLI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether telecom system is not functioning properly due to lack of BTS Towers at many places of the country and if so, the details thereof including the names of the places where telecom system is inadequate, State/UT-wise;
- (b) the efforts made by the Government to set up sufficient number of BTS towers and the time since when these efforts are being made?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

(a) Sir, Telecom Services are functioning properly in most of the places in the country except a few rural and remote areas. Service Providers install towers/Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) as per their techno-commercial viability and to fulfil the rollout obligation criteria as per their License Conditions. Multiple factors such as inability to install additional BTSs on existing Towers due to loading issues, opposition from local residents due to perceived fear of EMF (Electro-Magnetic Field) radiation, non-availability of suitable structure at a few places, inaccessible terrain and transportation difficulties of equipment at some locations, and unwarranted delays in commissioning new sites due to various procedural formalities from local administration/ agencies, limit the feasibility of tower installation.

(b) Government has enabled growth of Telecom Sector by bringing in new licence conditions, regulations and policies. These include:

- Sharing of Active Infrastructure by TSPs,
- Spectrum Sharing,
- Spectrum Trading,
- Spectrum Harmonisation and
- Right of Way Rules.

With these policy interventions, the mobile BTS has shown a growth of 249% during the 6½ years and tower infrastructure has shown a growth of 55% during the last 5 years. The details are attached as **Annexure-I**.

Government has implemented/planned various schemes with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to expand mobile services in rural and remote areas. The first scheme of USOF for provision of BTS Towers was “Shared Mobile Infrastructure”. The agreement signed with successful bidders under this Scheme was effective from 01/06/2007. The details of scheme with USOF support has been enumerated in **Annexure-II**.

Also, Government of India notified Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules – 2016 in November 2016 to address the difficulties being faced by the Telecom Service Providers, Infrastructure Providers and Telecom Companies with various States/ Union Territories and concerned Central Government Departments/ Agencies in creation of underground and over ground telecom infrastructure on account of multiple right of way related issues and exorbitant charges. These rules govern the Right of Way procedures for setting up towers and laying fibres across the country.

**Growth of BTS**(From March 2014 to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021)

No. of BTSs as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	<b>6,49,834</b>
No. of BTSs as on 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	<b>22,66,235</b>
BTSs added (during the period)	<b>15,37,430</b>
Percentage growth:	<b>249%</b>

S. No.	License Service Area	Total BTSs as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	Total BTSs (as on 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021)	BTS added during the period March 2014 to 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	
		Total (GSM, 3G, 4G-LTE)	Total (GSM, 3G, 4G-LTE)	Number of BTS added	%age of BTS added
1	Andhra Pradesh	53858	169208	115350	214%
2	Assam	12180	53243	41063	337%
3	Bihar	34176	137873	103697	303%
4	Chennai	18983	48688	29705	156%
5	Delhi	27383	106095	78712	287%
6	Gujarat	40245	135138	94893	236%
7	Himachal Pradesh	6365	23414	17049	268%
8	Haryana	14709	53133	38424	261%
9	Jammu & Kashmir	10924	35708	24784	227%
10	Karnataka	47295	145900	98605	208%
11	Kolkata	14946	46449	31503	211%
12	Kerala	29995	88498	58503	195%
13	Mumbai	21679	54791	33112	153%
14	Maharashtra	56096	189884	133788	238%

S. No.	License Service Area	Total BTSs as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	Total BTSs (as on 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021)	BTS added during the period March 2014 to 26th January 2021	
		Total (GSM, 3G, 4G-LTE)	Total (GSM, 3G, 4G-LTE)	Number of BTS added	%age of BTS added
15	Madhya Pradesh	39935	152291	112356	281%
16	North-East	7542	34281	26739	355%
17	Odisha	16416	67971	51555	314%
18	Punjab	22079	83574	61495	279%
19	Rajasthan	30963	123032	92069	297%
20	Tamil Nadu	41685	126716	85031	204%
21	Uttar Pradesh (East)	45024	163300	118276	263%
22	Uttar Pradesh(West)	34291	120169	85878	250%
23	West Bengal	23065	106879	83814	363%
<b>Total</b>		<b>649834</b>	<b>2266235</b>	<b>1616401</b>	<b>249%</b>

## Growth of Tower

(From Dec'2015 to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021):

No. of Towers for mobile services: (in Dec'2015)	<b>4,15,724</b>
No. of Towers for mobile services: (as on 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021)	<b>6,43,842</b>
Towers added (during the period):	<b>2,28,118</b>
Percentage growth	<b>55%</b>

S. No.	License Service Area	Total Towers (Dec' 2015)	Total Towers (as on 26.1.21)	Towers added during the period	% of Towers added
1	Andhra Pradesh	32058	48119	16061	50%
2	Assam	9446	15005	5559	59%
3	Bihar	27363	49171	21808	80%
4	Chennai	10773	13090	2317	22%
5	Delhi	16496	30367	13871	84%
6	Gujarat	24367	39239	14872	61%
7	Himachal Pradesh	4869	7533	2664	55%
8	Haryana	9219	14485	5266	57%
9	Jammu & Kashmir	7841	10295	2454	31%
10	Karnataka	26438	41968	15530	59%
11	Kolkata	7854	15564	7710	98%
12	Kerala	14520	18665	4145	29%
13	Mumbai	13227	17085	3858	29%
14	Maharashtra	34254	51108	16854	49%
15	Madhya Pradesh	27458	47109	19651	72%
16	North-East	5383	10058	4675	87%
17	Odisha	16932	21309	4377	26%
18	Punjab	15339	22275	6936	45%

19	Rajasthan	17592	34742	17150	97%
20	Tamil Nadu	27016	34779	7763	29%
21	Uttar Pradesh (E)	29021	41805	12784	44%
22	Uttar Pradesh(W)	21796	33384	11588	53%
23	West Bengal	16462	26687	10225	62%
<b>Total</b>		<b>415724</b>	<b>643842</b>	<b>228118</b>	<b>55%</b>

Government Schemes with the support of USOF

**1. Mobile Services in Uncovered villages and seamless coverage along National Highway of North-Eastern Region (Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) :**

Under this scheme, Mobile connectivity is being provided by setting up 2004 towers in the 2128 uncovered villages and along National Highways of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of North-East region. The Agreement was signed on 08.12.2017 with M/s Bharti Airtel Limited & M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited and about 1,350 sites are already providing services.

**2. Mobile Services in Uncovered villages of Meghalaya and seamless coverage along National Highway:**

The project was approved by the Cabinet on 23.05.2018 and as per approval of Digital Communications Commission (DCC), the work has been awarded to M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited on 04.09.2020 for provisioning of 4G mobile services in 1,164 uncovered and along National Highways by installing 889 towers. Project will be completed in 18 months since the award of work.

**3. Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Arunachal Pradesh and 2 Districts of Assam:**

As per Cabinet approval on 09.12.2020, provision of 4G mobile services in 2374 uncovered villages by installing 1533 towers in Arunachal Pradesh and two Districts of Assam (Karbi Anglong & Dima Hasao) will be carried out and RFP is being floated.

**4. 354 Uncovered Villages Scheme:** Tender for provision of mobile service in 354 uncovered villages of J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Border areas and other priority areas was awarded at a cost of Rs. 337 Crores and is under implementation by M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm. The survey and tower installation is under progress and the project is likely to be completed by December, 2021.

**5. Aspirational Districts Scheme**

- (a) A Scheme for **502 uncovered villages of Aspirational District over four States** (namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan) for provisioning of 4G based Mobile services has been finalized. Letter of Intent (LoI) and agreement is under process.
- (b) A scheme for 7,287 uncovered villages is under Cabinet approval for provisioning of 4G based Mobile service in 44 Aspirational Districts of 5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha at an estimated cost of Rs. 6,466 Crore.

**6. Provision of 4G Mobile Coverage in Uncovered Villages and seamless 4G Mobile coverage of NH223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands:**

DCC in its meeting held on 20.12.2019 approved a proposal for setting up of 82 towers to provide mobile services on 4G Technology in identified 85 uncovered villages and 42 towers for providing 4G mobile services to bridge the gaps in mobile connectivity along NH-223. The RFP has been finalised and work is likely to be awarded shortly.

**7. Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme:**

A scheme was launched to provide subsidy support for setting up and managing infrastructure sites/towers for provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas, where there was no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. The agreements, signed with the successful bidders in May 2007, were effective from 01.06.2007. A total number of 7,317 towers and 16,254 BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) have been set up and the project is completed.

**8. Scheme for Mobile Communication Services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas:-**

**(i) LWE Phase-I:**

(a) On 20.08.2014, the Cabinet approved the implementation of the project in LWE areas at a cost of Rs. 3567.58 crore to provide Mobile Services in the 10 affected States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The project has been completed by installing 2343 towers.

(b) 4G Upgradation of existing LWE-I sites is under consideration for the sites which are not yet covered by 4G.

**(ii) LWE Phase II:**

The Cabinet approved on 23.05.2018 a proposal for Phase II of the project in LWE affected areas with a subsidy support of Rs. 7330 crores. The project has been subsequently approved for 2,542 towers to provide 4G mobile services and the RFP is under approval for floating at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,200 Cr. Retendering is under process for 2542 number of tower sites. DCC approval for the same has been obtained on 01.12.2020.

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