GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1609
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH FEBRUARY, 2021

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY IN STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT VILLAGES

†1609. SHRI RAJAN VICHARE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Ministry is working on any scheme to strengthen rural India and if so, the details thereof;

(b)   the total number of villages which have been connected with Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) so far, State/ UT-wise and the details thereof;

(c)   whether all the villages of strategic importance and those located in border areas are getting the facility of mobile connectivity and if so, the details thereof;

(d)   whether the Ministry is working on any scheme to promote information technology in rural India and if so, the details thereof; and

(e)   the role played by the Ministry in the fight against COVID-19 along with the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a)   For strengthening telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country, the Department of Telecom has undertaken several schemes in the past like Village Public Telephone scheme, Rural Wireline Broadband scheme, Shared mobile infrastructure scheme etc. Presently, the following major schemes, with support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), have been taken up by the Department of Telecommunications:

(i)   **BharatNet Project**: This project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2, 50,000) in the country. Under the project, the Last Mile connectivity is being provided through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, including Fiber to the Home (FTTH), to access broadband/internet services at Public places & Government Institutions. As on 01.02.2021, Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed at 1,05,105 GPs and 4,85,723 FTTH connections have been provided.

(ii)   Provision of **mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas under Phase-I** has been completed by installing **2,343** towers.

(iii) Provision of **4G mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas under Phase-II** by installing 2,542 number of tower sites**.**

(iv)   **Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region:** As on 15.01.2021, a total number of 1,354 towers have been installed, and out of them 1,339 sites are providing services.

(v)   Provision of **4G Mobile Coverage in 85 uncovered Villages and seamless 4G Mobile coverage of NH223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**

(vi)   Provision of **Mobile connectivity in 354 uncovered villages of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Border area & other priority areas.**

(vii) Provision of **4G mobile connectivity in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in four States** (namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan).

(viii) **Laying of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands** for providing high bandwidth connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

(ix)   **Submarine OFC Connectivity between Kochi and Lakshadweep Islands:**

Further, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)   initiated a Pilot Project-'Implementation of Digital Village' to cover 700 Gram Panchayats/Villages   for the delivery of citizen centric services to the rural citizens.   The CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd is the implementing agency for the project.

(b)   Under BharatNet project, the Gram Panchayats are being provided connectivity through an optimal mix of media (OFC/Radio/Satellite). As on 15.01.2021 a total number of 1,44,678 Villages (Gram Panchayats) have been made Service Ready on OFC. The State/UT-wise details are given in **Annexure-1**.

(c)   Mobile connectivity in uncovered villages, including those of strategic importance and located in border areas in the country, is being provided by the Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) under various schemes. The Schemes, taken up with USOF support, are mentioned in para (a) (ii) to (a) (vii) above.

(d)   The MeitY's Pilot Project-'Implementation of Digital Village' is for the delivery of citizen centric services to the rural citizens. The project is for provisioning of the services namely Tele-Health, Tele-Veterinary consultation, Education, Financial Inclusion Awareness Programme, Skill Development, Solar street lights, Government to Citizens Services (G2C), Business to Citizen (B2C) Services, etc.

(e) The following major initiatives for fight against COVID-19 have been taken up:

(i) Various Ring back tones have been implemented to make the citizens of India aware about COVID-19, depending upon the changed circumstances and requirements from time to time as per direction of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(ii) Instructions were issued to all TSPs for providing Call Detail Records (CDR) and location of subscribers for tracing the contacts of the Corona infected subscribers.

(iii) Covid Quarantine Alert System (CQAS) was developed for sending auto Email / SMS to State Government agencies, if an identified Corona positive or quarantined person moves away from his/her quarantined location area.

(iv) Instructions were issued to all Telecom Service Providers to make the AAROGYA SETU mobile APP free from all the data charges. i.e. no data charge to be incurred for downloading the AAROGYA SETU mobile APP and any subscriber with zero balance can also download the AAROGYA SETU mobile APP.

(v) Allocation of different short codes to various Central Ministries/ Departments, State Governments, Hon'ble Supreme Court and Hon'ble High Courts to mitigate the effect of COVID-19.

Annexure referred to in Part (b) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1609 for Answer on 10.02.2021

State/UT wise list of Service Ready villages (GPs) connected by Optical Fibre Cable as on 15.01.2021

S. No.	State/UT	No. of GPs service ready on OFC (excluding BHQs)
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	7
2	Andhra Pradesh	1687
3	Arunachal Pradesh	79
4	Assam	1497
5	Bihar	8287
6	Chandigarh	12
7	Chhattisgarh	6561
8	Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli	36
9	Gujarat	13039
10	Haryana	6080
11	Himachal Pradesh	246
12	Jammu & Kashmir (including Ladakh)	381
13	Jharkhand	3200
14	Karnataka	6080
15	Kerala	977
16	Lakshadweep	0
17	Madhya Pradesh	14509
18	Maharashtra	18059
19	Manipur	320
20	Meghalaya	122
21	Mizoram	41
22	Nagaland	127
23	Odisha	5127
24	Puducherry	98
25	Punjab	12656
26	Rajasthan	8711
27	Sikkim	22
28	Tamil Nadu	0
29	Telangana	1946
30	Tripura	569
31	Uttar Pradesh	30500
32	Uttarakhand	1508
33	West Bengal	2194
	Total	**1,44,678**

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