

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2545
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH MARCH, 2021**

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

2545. SHRI B.Y. RAGHAVENDRA:
SHRI NALIN KUMAR KATEEL:
SHRI D.K.SURESH:
SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India's digital infrastructure is on par with that of countries like China, US, South Korea, Japan, etc., to support fast broadband technologies and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) proposes to strengthen the country's digital infrastructure to make it on par with that of aforesaid countries and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has set any targets under NDCP and if so, the details thereof along with the achievements made by the Government thereunder, target wise; and
- (d) whether the Government is making any special efforts to achieve ten million Wi-Fi hotspots by 2022 and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The National Digital Communications Policy-2018 was launched by the Government of India with a vision to fulfill the information and communication needs of citizens and enterprises through the establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient, secure, accessible and affordable Digital Communications Infrastructure, supporting high speed broadband technologies, at par with the digitally developed countries like China, US, South Korea, Japan etc. The policy aims to support India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society. This target will be achieved by accomplishing the strategic objectives of provisioning of broadband for all; creating 4 Million additional jobs in the digital communications sector; enhancing the contribution of the digital communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from ~ 6% in 2017; propelling India to the top 50 Nations in the ICT Development Index of ITU from 134 in 2017; enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains; and ensuring digital sovereignty. The achievements made so far are placed at **Annexure**.

(d) At present about 5 lakh Wi-Fi access points are working across the country. The Government has recently approved "Prime Minister Wireless Access Network Interface (PM-WANI)" framework to enhance proliferation of broadband across the country through Public Wi-Fi Networks. This framework envisages setting up of public Wi-Fi hotspots by entrepreneurs.

SN	Strategic Objectives of the National Digital Communications Policy-2018 and Achievements thereof												
1	<p>Provisioning of Broadband for All:</p> <p>The Government has launched National Broadband Mission to provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all. Several Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) projects and schemes such as BharatNet, Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for North Eastern Region, CTDP for Islands, and Provision of telecom towers in Left Wing Extremism affected areas are being implemented for achieving this objective.</p>												
2	<p>Creating 4 Million additional jobs in the Digital Communications sector:</p> <p>Initiatives taken by the Government and Telecom Service providers have boosted the economic activity such as e-commerce, telecom operations, cable TV operations, etc. in the remote and difficult areas of the country. This has resulted in creating several job opportunities. The recently approved PM-WANI framework will further boost such economic activities and create sizeable number of jobs in the country and encourage entrepreneurs.</p>												
3	<p>Enhancing the contribution of the Digital Communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from ~ 6% in 2017:</p> <p>Digital Communications is playing a central role in driving the larger economic activities in the country. The sector has given a fillip to significantly increase uptake of services in e-Commerce, FinTech, HealthTech, EdTech, AgriTech, UrbanTech, etc. Major services by Government to citizens and Government to businesses are also primarily delivered through the underlying telecommunications, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. Consumption of these services has led to 5 times growth of the wireless data consumption in the country. In parallel, average per GB tariff has dropped by almost 95% in 4 years.</p>												
4	<p>Propelling India to the Top 50 Nations in the ICT Development Index of ITU from 134 in 2017:</p> <p>The ICT Development Index was last published by the ITU in 2017. Since then, it has not been published.</p>												
5	<p>Enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains:</p> <p>Enhancement of India's contribution to the Global Value Chain is a continuous process. Several steps such as liberalizing spectrum licensing norms for experimentation and research, simplification of Import License requirements for domestic OEMs have been taken to enable India as manufacturing hub. In comparison to 2017-18, the imports of Telecom equipment (including mobile phones, parts and telecom cables) has reduced and the export has increased continuously, as under, thereby enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="480 1186 1243 1346"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Export* (Rs. Crore)</th> <th>Imports* (Rs. Crore)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>11,023</td> <td>1,49,546</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>22,583</td> <td>1,33,585</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>37,963</td> <td>1,06,195</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>*Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics</i></p>	Year	Export* (Rs. Crore)	Imports* (Rs. Crore)	2017-18	11,023	1,49,546	2018-19	22,583	1,33,585	2019-20	37,963	1,06,195
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6	<p>Ensuring Digital Sovereignty:</p> <p>There are provisions available in the Indian Telegraph Act-1885 and the Indian Telegraph Rules made thereunder to protect secrecy, privacy & confidentiality of communications. Further, appropriate conditions have been incorporated in the Unified Telecom License for protection of privacy and confidentiality of communications over the telecommunications networks.</p> <p>Security testing framework is under the overall framework of Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE).</p> <p>The Government has recently notified the 'National Security Directive on Telecommunication Sector' which envisages for identification of trusted source and trusted products for telecom sector.</p>												
