

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2618
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH MARCH, 2021**

PRIME MINISTER Wi-Fi ACCESS NETWORK SCHEME

2618. SHRI VELUSAMY P.:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has approved a framework for the proliferation of public Wi-Fi networks through PM Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme and if so, the details and the salient features thereof;
- (b) the number of Public Data Offices (PDO) to be established in the country and the number of manpower required to monitor the said scheme;
- (c) whether free access of Wi-Fi will be given to all citizens of the country and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the mechanism put in place in the scheme to prevent the misuse of free Wi-Fi facility?

ANSWER

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

(a) Yes, Sir. The proposal of the Department for Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks named as Prime Minister Wireless Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) framework has been approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held on 9/12/2020. As per the WANI framework, it is envisaged that last mile broadband connectivity will be through a network of public Wi-Fi access points. The backhaul requirement for these Wi-Fi access points to be met by internet bandwidth from the telecom service providers/internet service providers. Under the distributed architecture and unbundling of functions, the WANI eco-system consists of following players who will neither be required to take any license nor pay any license fee:

- **Public Data Office (PDO):** To establish, maintain, and operate WANI compliant Wi-Fi Access Points and deliver broadband services to subscribers.
- **Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA):** An aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to Authorization and Accounting.
- **App Provider:** To register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
- **Central Registry:** To maintain, in accordance with the WANI architecture and specifications, the details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs.

(b) Under the WANI framework, it is expected that a large number of Public Data Offices (PDO) will be set up by small entrepreneurs depending on the market demand with an objective to earn return on their investment. The scheme will be monitored by the existing officials of Department of Telecommunications and would not require separate manpower for this purpose.

(c) & (d) The scheme does not envisage free access of Wi-Fi.
