

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3648  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021**

**INVESTMENT IN NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE OF RURAL AREAS**

†3648. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the private telecom companies are reluctant to invest in network infrastructure of rural areas resulting in poor condition of broadband access;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto along with the corrective action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure intensive digital access in urban and rural areas of the country; and
- (d) the funds earmarked and spent by the Government to make available the internet broadband services separately in urban and rural areas during 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) The private telecom companies are given licenses to provide telecom services in the country. As per the Notice Inviting Application (NIA) for auction of spectrum and respective license conditions, Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are required to fulfil minimum rollout obligations which include coverage of District Headquarters, Block Headquarters and rural SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas). Further expansion beyond rollout obligations lies with the TSPs depending on their business decision.

As per data collected from TSPs in 2020, it is estimated that around 5,72,551 villages out of 5,97,618 inhabited villages in the country have mobile network coverage. However, State/UT-wise details of inhabited villages having 3G/4G mobile internet coverage are given in **Annexure**. Mobile coverage in uncovered villages in the country is being provided by the Government and TSPs in a phased manner. In this regard, the measures taken by Government are inter-alia given below:

- Government has prioritized to reach remote areas of the country such as North-Eastern States, Islands, Himalayan States, Western Border States and more importantly the Left Wing Extremism affected areas in the first phase.
- BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to the all Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country.
- Under Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Phase -I scheme, 2343 mobile towers have been installed for provisioning of mobile services. Project has been completed.
- LWE Phase-II scheme has provision for 2,542 number of towers locations for providing 4G mobile services.
- A Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) is under implementation for North Eastern Region to provide mobile coverage in uncovered villages, along with National Highways and to strengthen transmission network.
- Scheme for providing mobile connectivity in 354 uncovered villages of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, J&K, Ladakh, border areas and other priority areas is under implementation.
- A scheme for provisioning of 4G based mobile services in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational districts of four states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan has been finalized.

(c) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to the all GPs (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country. As on 27.01.2021, a total number of 1,51,431 GPs (including Block Headquarters) have been made Service Ready under the project. Moreover, the proposal of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks under the framework of Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) has recently been approved by the Government. The proposal will enable proliferation of Broadband internet through public Wi-Fi hotspots which will facilitate broadband access in the country including rural areas.

The Government has also taken several policy initiatives to facilitate infrastructure growth in the country which include permitting trading/sharing/liberalization of spectrum, permitting passive & active infrastructure sharing, notification of Right of Way Rules 2016 etc.

(d) The Government does not specifically earmark funds for providing internet broadband services separately in urban and rural areas. However, Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

was established with effect from 01.04.2002 under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act 2003, as amended from time to time, to provide financial support for the provision of telecom services in commercially unviable rural and remote areas of the country. The scope of USOF covers all telecom services including mobile services, broadband connectivity and creation of infrastructure like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), etc. in rural and remote areas.

Annexure referred to in reply of para (a) & (b) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3648 to be answered on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunpuria, regarding "Investment in Network Infrastructure of Rural Areas"

**State/UT-wise number of inhabited villages with 3G/4G mobile internet coverage**

S.No.	State/ UT Name	Number of inhabited villages as per census 2011	Number of inhabited villages with 3G/4G mobile internet coverage as per 2020 data
1	Andaman & Nicobar	396	85
2	Andhra Pradesh	16158	14063
3	Arunachal Pradesh	5258	1915
4	Assam	25372	24141
5	Bihar	39073	38752
6	Chandigarh	5	5
7	Chhattisgarh	19567	16774
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	84	73
9	Delhi	103	103
10	Goa	320	299
11	Gujarat	17843	17068
12	Haryana	6642	6641
13	Himachal Pradesh	17882	16908
14	Jammu & Kashmir	6101	5713
15	Jharkhand	29492	27423
16	Karnataka	27397	26789
17	Kerala	1017	1017
18	Ladakh	236	81
19	Lakshadweep	6	6
20	Madhya Pradesh	51929	49479
21	Maharashtra	40959	38945
22	Manipur	2515	1709
23	Meghalaya	6459	4041
24	Mizoram	704	408
25	Nagaland	1400	1022
26	Odisha	47677	38730
27	Punjab	12168	12167
28	Puducherry	90	90
29	Rajasthan	43264	41811
30	Sikkim	425	409
31	Tamil Nadu	15049	14975
32	Telangana	10128	9753
33	Tripura	863	803
34	Uttarakhand	15745	13335
35	Uttar Pradesh	97813	97193
36	West Bengal	37478	37453
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,97,618</b>	<b>5,60,179</b>

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