

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2558
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2021**

MOBILE TOWERS IN TRIBAL AND HILLY AREAS

2558. SHRIMATI PRAMILA BISOYI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to expedite the setting up of mobile towers in tribal and hilly areas of the country including Odisha to address the problem of poor connectivity;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to improve the reach and quality of broadband services of BSNL in rural areas in view of huge increase in internet consumption on account of online education during the pandemic years;
- (c) whether the Government is planning to provide BSNL broadband connections in rural areas and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to provide such connections in rural areas of Odisha; and
- (d) the time by when all the rural areas will be connected with broadband services of BSNL?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) The Government through Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) provides Mobile coverage in rural areas including tribal and hilly areas in the country in a phased manner. Government has approved various schemes/projects through Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) support for mobile and broadband services in rural and remote areas across the country. The details of the schemes are attached as **Annexure-I**.

(b) to (d) The Government has approved the revival plan for BSNL on 23.10.2019, which, inter-alia, includes administrative allotment of spectrum for providing 4G services with funding through budgetary allocation. With the launch of 4G services on Pan-India basis, reach and quality of BSNL wireless broadband services will expand in the country including in rural areas.

DETAILS OF SCHEMES/PROJECTS TO PROVIDE/FACILITATE THE MOBILE AND BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS INCLUDING TRIBAL AND HILLY AREAS IN THE COUNTRY:

- (i) Under Left Wing Extremism Phase-I project, provision of mobile connectivity at 2355 towers locations in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal has been implemented by Government of India.
- (ii) Under LWE Phase-II project, installation of 2542 mobile towers has been approved for providing mobile services across 10 states including 483 mobile towers in 9 districts of Odisha which are mainly hilly districts and out of these 9 districts, 6 are tribal districts also. The 9 districts are Bargarh, Baudh, Kalahandi, Kandhmal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur, Nuapada and Rayagada. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was floated on 11-03-2021 for 2542 towers and the bids are under evaluation.
- (iii) Provision of mobile connectivity in 354 villages of uncovered border areas including J&K, Ladakh has also been approved and the agreement has been signed on 28-04-2020. The roll out period of this scheme is up to Oct, 2021.
- (iv) Aspirational District Scheme for provisioning of 4G based Mobile service in 502 uncovered villages in Aspirational Districts of four states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan has been approved on 20-12-2019 and the work has been awarded.
- (v) Two schemes funded from USOF have been approved for provision of 4G mobile services in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh & two districts of Assam (KarbiAnglong& Dima Hasao) as mentioned below:
 - **4G Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Meghalaya and seamless coverage along National Highway:** The work has been awarded for 1,164 uncovered villages and 11 sites along National Highways by installation of 889 in Meghalaya on 04.09.2020 for provisioning of 4G mobile services. At present, the Project is under implementation and is targeted to be completed in 18 months since the award of work.
 - **4G Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Arunachal Pradesh and 2 Districts of Assam:** This scheme has been approved for provision of 4G mobile services in 2374 uncovered villages by installation of 1511 towers in Arunachal Pradesh and two Districts of Assam (Karbi Anglong & Dima Hasao). The tender has been floated and opened on 02.06.2021 and the same is under evaluation for selection of Implementing Agency.
- (vi) **Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of NER and seamless coverage along National Highway:** Under this scheme, Mobile connectivity is to be provided by setting up 2004 towers in the uncovered villages and along National Highways of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of North-East region. The project is already under implementation and 1358 sites are already providing services, covering 1246 villages and 283 National Highways sites.
