

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2596
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2021**

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR BHARATNET PROJECT

2596. SHRI RAM MOHAN NAIDU KINJARAPU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the salient features of the BharatNet project;
- (b) the manner in which recently-announced revised implementation strategy for the BharatNet project differ from the previous strategy and the reasons for changing the implementation strategy for the project;
- (c) the details of the funds allocated, objectives and targets revised, post the change in the implementation strategy of the said project;
- (d) the details and the expected dates for completion of international bidding process under the revised strategy;
- (e) the role of States in the project;
- (f) the names of States where the BharatNet project is going to be implemented under the Public-Private Participation (PPP) made under the aforesaid strategy and the reason for not including the state of Andhra Pradesh in the said list along with the details of proposals, if any , to include the said State into the list; and
- (g) the implementing agencies for the said project at national, state, district, village level?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (g) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. The infrastructure created under BharatNet project is a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers. The Phase-I has been implemented by laying incremental underground Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) in linear topology with Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) technology. The implementation of Phase-II is by connecting GPs through an optimal mix of media (i.e. OFC, radio and satellite) and by laying new OFC is from Block to GPs.

On 30.06.2021, Union Cabinet accorded approval for a revised strategy for implementation of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 16 States of the country covering about 3.61 lakh villages including GPs.

The recently announced PPP model differs from the previous strategy in terms of private sector participation in creation, operation & maintenance and utilisation of BharatNet. The revised strategy is expected to leverage the existing BharatNet infrastructure and harness the private sector capabilities for execution, maintenance, and utilization of network for delivery of services. On 19.07.2017, the Cabinet approved estimated cost of Rs 42,068 crore for BharatNet Phase I&II implementation for connectivity upto GPs. Further, the maximum Viability Gap Funding (VGF) approved for the above-mentioned PPP model is Rs. 19,041 crores. The total approved cost of BharatNet project is now Rs. 61,109 crores and its target date of completion is August,2023.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) has been floated on 20.07.2021 through international/global bidding. The construction period of the project has been kept upto 18 months, and will commence within 6 months of signing of Concession Agreement.

The States are expected to play an important role in the success the of PPP model by giving free Right of Way (RoW), actively utilizing the created network, etc.

The States presently included in the PPP model are Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. The State where Phase-II of BharatNet is being implemented under State-led model which includes Andhra Pradesh, have not been considered under the recent Cabinet approval.
