GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2753
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2021

POOR NETWORK AND CALL DROP

†2753. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any measures to ensure better network service and to address the problem of call drops in areas affected by poor connectivity and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(b) whether the Government is aware of the problem of call drops and poor network connectivity in many areas, particularly in the villages of districts and Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto along with the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) whether the Government proposes to allow spectrum trading and sharing in order to improve connectivity and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)

(a) to (c) The Government is aware of the problem of call drops. The call drop in a mobile network can happen due to many reasons including characteristics of radio propagation for wireless communications, non-availability of sites, etc. The occurrence of call drops is found to be common in mobile networks across the world with varying degree of occurrences. Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) in India are required to ensure that the call-drop rate in their mobile networks remain within the benchmarks laid down by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

TRAI has been monitoring the performance of TSPs for the License Service Area (LSA) as a whole, through Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs) submitted by them against the benchmarks for various Quality of Service parameters laid down by TRAI. District-wise/specific area-wise performance is not assessed. At present, around 1927 Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) in Sawai Madhopur District in Rajasthan are providing mobile network connectivity. New Mobile Towers/ BTSs are installed by TSPs to improve coverage and capacity of their networks based on their techno-commercial assessments.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has taken several policy initiatives to facilitate infrastructure growth for delivery of quality services. These include permitting trading/sharing/ liberalisation of spectrum, permitting passive & active infrastructure sharing, notification of Right of Way Rules 2016, making available government land/buildings for installations of towers, etc. Nearly,16.14 lakh additional BTSs for 2G/3G/4G-LTE services have been added by TSPs during the period from March, 2014 (6.49 lakh BTSs) to 27thJuly 2021 (22.64 lakh BTSs) across the country.

Moreover, in order to obtain direct feedback from subscribers, DoT has launched an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) wherein around 5.02 crore subscribers have been individually contacted since December 2016, out of which 67.52 lakh subscribers have participated in the survey. The feedback is shared with the TSPs for taking corrective actions in a time bound manner. As a result, about 1.60 lakh individual cases of call drops have been resolved so far and around 7,592 BTSs have been installed by the TSPs specifically to resolve the call drops issues received through IVRS.

TRAI has issued "The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Fifth Amendment) Regulations, 2017" effective from 1st October, 2017. These Regulations have prescribed two revised stringent parameters for assessing call drop in mobile network, viz. Drop Call Rate (DCR) Spatial distribution measure (benchmark $\leq$ 2%) implies that atleast 90% of Cells in the network should perform better than specified 2% benchmark on at least 90% of days. Similarly, another new parameter, DCR Temporal distribution measure (benchmark $\leq$ 3%) will give confidence that on at least 90% of Days, network performed better than specified 3% benchmark for atleast 97% of the Cells.

Wherever the benchmark is not met by service providers, the explanation from the service providers is called for. After considering the explanation, submitted by service providers in this regard, TRAI imposes financial disincentives for non-compliance with the benchmark. Effective from 1st October 2017, TRAI has introduced a revised graded Financial Disincentives (FD) structure for DCR parameters, based on the extent to which, a TSP's performance deviates from the specified DCR benchmark.

As per PMR for Cellular Mobile Telephone Services for the quarter ending March, 2021 of TRAI, all TSPs are complying to both DCR benchmarks except M/s BSNL in one LSA (West Bengal) and M/s VIL in one LSA (Jammu & Kashmir).

(d) TRAI had given its recommendations on "Guidelines on Spectrum Sharing" and "Working Guidelines for Spectrum Trading" on 21.07.2014 and 28.01.2014 respectively. Subsequently, Department of Telecommunications allowed sharing of Access Spectrum vide guidelines dated 24.09.2015 and trading of Access Spectrum vide guidelines dated 12.10.2015.

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