

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

**LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1341
TO BE ANSWERED ON 9TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND

1341. SHRI JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has allocated funds from the Universal Service Obligation Fund(USOF) for improving the telecommunication in Ladakh during the last five financial years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is aware of the actual network radial limits and bandwidth speed of each of the mobile towers provided by the operators on ground in Ladakh through VSAT and fibre under USOF and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether it is according to the requirements fixed by the Government in the contract or not, if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has any plans to upgrade 4G internet on the existing BSNL towers in Ladakh by utilising USOF, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (f) whether the Government has any plans to sanction more mobile towers for the uncovered villages/ hamlets in Ladakh during the financial year 2022-2023; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) Under 354 uncovered villages scheme of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), 57 villages are planned for mobile services in Ladakh, the work for which has been awarded at an estimated cost of Rs 57.40 crore. In addition, an order for covering additional 10 uncovered villages of Ladakh has also been issued. Under BharatNet project, 190 Gram Panchayats/additional sites have been provided with broadband connectivity over satellite media at an estimated capex cost of Rs. 6.41 crore.

For various USOF schemes of Ladakh, Rs. 23.87 lakh has been released through Controller of Communication Accounts (CCA), Department of Telecommunications, Jammu & Kashmir during last five years.

(c) & (d) The actual network radial limit of a mobile tower depends on many factors, such as topography and climate of the area, height of tower, frequency and radiating power of the mobile signals, etc. The Bandwidth speed depends on the number of customers accessing the available bandwidth on a sharing mode simultaneously. The mobile towers have bandwidth availability as per their backhaul (Optical Fibre Cable/ Very Small Aperture Terminal - VSAT) capacity.

(e) Presently, there is no plan to upgrade the existing mobile towers of BSNL in Ladakh with funding from USOF.

(f) & (g) Mobile services are provided in a phased manner by the Government and Telecom Services Provider (TSPs) in the uncovered villages of the Country, including Ladakh.
