

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. 258
FOR ANSWER ON 3RD AUGUST, 2022**

NATIONAL OPTICAL FIBRE NETWORK PROJECT

*258. DR. VISHNU PRASAD M.K.:
SHRI Y.S. AVINASH REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the optical fibre cables laid in Tamil Nadu so far under National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project along with the total cost of project and the funds allocated;
- (b) the timeline fixed for achieving the remaining target;
- (c) the details of the number of Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh that have been connected with broadband and Wi-Fi hotspots so far under the said project; and
- (d) the reasons for a number of GPs not being connected to the said services in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh under the said project so far?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS & ELECTRONICS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)**

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 258 FOR 3RD AUGUST, 2022 REGARDING “NATIONAL OPTICAL FIBRE NETWORK PROJECT”

(a) & (b) BharatNet project (earlier known as National Optical Fiber Network) is implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) of the country, including Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, around 428 km of OFC has been laid under BharatNet project, as on 25.07.2022. The approved cost of the project is Rs. 1815.31 crore, and about Rs. 235.11 crore has been released. The scope of BharatNet has been extended up to all inhabited villages beyond GPs in the country with the timeline as 2025.

(c) & (d) As on 25.07.2022, under BharatNet project, no GP in Tamil Nadu has been made Service Ready, whereas, in Andhra Pradesh, 2840 GPs have been made Service Ready.

Phase-I of BharatNet was not taken up in Tamil Nadu as the State Government signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) only on 31.03.2017 for implementation of BharatNet project with Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL). BharatNet Phase-II in Tamil Nadu is being implemented by the State Government under State-led model covering all GPs of the State. The Phase-II project also got delayed, as the first tender floated in December 2019 was cancelled. The second tender was floated in October, 2020 under four packages. But Work order could be awarded for only two packages till October 2021 as the other two packages went under litigation. Subsequently, after disposal of pending litigation, the work of remaining two packages has also been awarded on 30.03.2022 and 27.05.2022.

Phase-II of BharatNet in Andhra Pradesh is implemented under State-led model and, 1151 GPs have been made Service Ready, out of 11,254 planned GPs. The Phase-II project work was stalled since March 2020 due to State's request for changing the implementation strategy from aerial to underground for the remaining work. In November, 2021; the State Government agreed to continue the project as per the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), i.e. laying OFC in aerial mode, and the same has been started.

Under Bharatnet Phase-I in Andhra Pradesh, a total number of 1681 GPs were taken up for implementation (through Power Grid Corporation of India Limited), out of which 1680 GPs have been made Service Ready. Further, 9 GPs have been made Service Ready on Satellite media out of 20 planned GPs.

The infrastructure created under BharatNet project is a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the Service Providers, and the same can be utilized to provide broadband services, such as Wi-Fi Hotspots, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections, leased lines, dark fibre, backhaul to mobile towers, etc. So far, 4530 FTTH connections and 1570 Wi-Fi hotspots have been provided in Phase-I GPs in Andhra Pradesh.

As the BharatNet Phase-II project is being implemented under State-led model in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the respective State Governments are responsible for its utilization also.
