

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:431

ANSWERED ON:23.02.2011

NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has submitted its recommendations regarding the National Broadband Plan to the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether TRAI has suggested to connect all urban cities and rural villages with broadband facilities;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the funds earmarked and spent thereon so far;
- (e) whether India`s broadband penetration is abysmally low when compared to mobile telephony; and
- (f) if so, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) to (d) Yes, Madam. TRAI has sent its recommendations on "National Broadband Plan" to DoT on 08th December 2010. The salient features of the TRAI's recommendations on National Broadband Plan are:

i) A National Broadband Network will be established, which will be an open access optical fibre network connecting all habitations with population of 500 and above.

ii) This Network will be established in two phases. The first phase covering all cities, urban areas and Gram Panchayats will be completed by the year 2012. Phase II will see the extension of the network of the network to all the habitations having a population more than 500, to be completed by the year 2013.

iii) In order to establish this broadband network, National Optical Fibre Agency (NOFA) at the national level and State Optical Fibre Agency (SOFA) at the State level would be formed. NOFA will establish the networks in all the 63 cities covered under Jawahar Lal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM). All the SOFAs, under the overall guidance of NOFA will establish the networks and backhaul in the rural areas and in the urban areas other than those cities covered under Jawahar Lal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM).

iv) This network which is estimated to cost about Rs.60000 crore, is proposed to be financed by USO fund and the loan given/guaranteed by Central Government.

(e) to (f) As on 31st December 2010 number of Broadband subscribers in the country is 10.92 million as compared to 752.19 million Mobile subscribers. The main reasons for slow growth of Broadband are non-availability of infrastructure to provide connectivity upto village level, non-availability of content in Vernacular Languages, low English literacy, affordability of Customer Premises Equipment and Right of Way.