

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1833

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INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO PANCHAYATS

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

- (a) whether the Government has set any target for internet connectivity of villages /panchayats through fibre optic network for the years 2012 and 2013;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise including Andhra Pradesh and the progress made in this regard so far;
- (c) the funds allocated and spent on the scheme till date, State-wise;
- (d) the details of internet connections provided by BSNL and MTNL in their respective service areas, State-wise and the number of districts in each State covered by internet connectivity so far, State-wise including Uttar Pradesh; and
- (e) the efforts made by the Government to provide internet access to people at affordable rates?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA)

(a) & (b) Government has approved the scheme for creation of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) on 25th October 2011, for providing Broadband connectivity to 2.5 lakh village Panchayats. The objective of this scheme is to extend the existing optical fiber network to Panchayats by utilizing the Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF).The project is proposed to be completed in 2 years. A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) namely Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) has been incorporated on 25th February 2012 to execute the project. Project rollout is yet to start. Presently, pilots are being conducted in Paravada block of Vishakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh, Arian block of Ajmer district in Rajasthan and Panisagar block of North Tripura district in Tripura.

(c) Rs. 15 crore has been spent for National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) under USOF schemes. The detail is as under:

Sl. No.	State	Amount allocated and spent. (Rs. in Crore)
		as on 31-07-2012
1	Rajasthan	3.77
2	NE	3.77
3	Andhra Pradesh	7.46
	Total	15.00

(d)The details of internet/ broadband connections provided by MTNL and BSNL in its service area as on 30.06.2012 are annexed at Annexure I and Annexure II.

(e) National Telecom Policy 2012 approved by Government on 31st may 2012 inter alia has following provisions regarding broadband.

Provide affordable and reliable broadband-on-demand by the year 2015 and to achieve 175 million broadband connections by the year 2017 and 6Q0 million by the year 2020 at minimum 2 Mbps download speed and making available higher speeds of at least 100 Mbps on demand.

Provide high speed and high quality broadband access to all village panchayats through a combination of technologies by the year 2014 and progressively to ail villages and habitations by 2020.

To develop an eco-system for broadband in close coordination with all stakeholders, including Ministries/ Government Departments/ Agencies to ensure availability of media for last mile access, aggregation layer, core network of adequate capacity, affordable equipment including user devices, terminals and Customer Premise quipment and an environment for development of relevant applications. Formulate policies to promote competition by encouraging service providers, whether large or small, to provide value added services under equitable and non-discriminatory conditions.

To lay special emphasis on providing reliable and affordable broadband access to rural and remote areas by appropriate

combination of optical fibre, wireless, VSAT and other technologies. Optical fibre network will be initially laid up to the village panchayat level by funding from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Extension of optical fibre connectivity from village panchayats to be taken up progressively to all villages and habitations. Access to this Optical Fibre Network will be open, non-discriminatory and technology neutral.

To recognise telecom, including broadband connectivity as a basic necessity like education and health and work towards 'Right to Broadband'.

To incorporate enabling provisions in the current regulatory framework so that existing infrastructure including cable TV networks are optimally utilised for extending high quality broadband services in rural areas also.

To provide continued support from USO fund for telecom services, including converged communication sendees in commercially unviable rural and remote areas.