

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3173

ANSWERED ON:12.12.2012

BROADBAND TO PANCHAYATS

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

- (a) whether the Government has launched National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) for providing high speed network in the country;
- (b) if so, the salient features of the plan and the funds earmarked for the purpose along with the village panchayats selected for the same so far, State-wise;
- (c) the name of the company/companies to which the work for implementation of the NOFN has been assigned and the criteria adopted for selection of village panchayats for the purpose;
- (d) whether the NOFN is proposed to be implemented across the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the time-frame fixed and progress made in this regard so far?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam,

The Government has approved a scheme for creation of a National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) on 25.10.2011 for providing Broadband connectivity to 2,47,864 Village Panchayats. (State-wise details of Village Panchayats to be covered is at Annexure-I). The project will be funded by USOF and initial estimated cost of project is Rs.20,000 Crore. The project is proposed to be completed in 2 years.

NOFN project is being executed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) i.e. Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL), a company incorporated under Indian Companies Act 1956 fully owned by Central Government, with equity participation from Government, BSNL, Railtel and Powergrid. The Company has been incorporated on 25.2.2012 for this purpose

The optical fibre has predominantly reached state capitals, districts and blocks, at present. National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project is planned to connect all the 2,47,864 Gram Panchayats in the country through optical fibre utilizing existing fibers of PSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and Power Grid and laying incremental fiber wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks.

(c)to(e) BBNL has allocated the work to 3 CPSUs (Central Public Sector Undertakings) BSNL, RailTel and Powergrid as per details tabulated in Annexure-U. So far, it is planned to connect 2,45,748 Gram Panchayats in the country.

NOFN Project is envisaged as a Centre-State joint effort. State Governments are expected to contribute by way of not levying any RoW charges. This requires suitable tri-partite MoU to be signed by GOI, State Governments & BBNL.

Tri-partite MoU has been signed with 13 States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Manipur, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and 3 Union Territories viz. Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Puducherry. Total 1,40,727 Gram Panchayats will get covered by Optical Fibre Network in these States and UTs.

Three Pilot Projects have been completed to cover all Gram Panchayats of Arain Block in Ajmer District (Rajasthan), Panisagar Block in North Tripura District (Tripura), Paravada Block in Vishakhapatnam District (A.P.). As on 15.10.2012, each of the 58 Gram Panchayats in these three Pilot Project Blocks have been provided with 100 Mbps bandwidth.