GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3761
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2013
INTERNET BROADBAND CONNECTIONS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a huge gap between the targets fixed and achieved in providing internet and broadband connections separately during the last three years and the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor separately for internet and broadband, State wise;

(c) the details of internet and broadband service providers in the country other than BSNL and MTNL and the number of connections provided by each of the service providers so far; State-wise;

(d) the criteria fixed by the Government for selection of villages under the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) and phases in which the NOFN is being implemented, State-wise;

(e) the steps taken by the Government to bridge the gap between the targets fixed and achieved; and

(f) the action taken/proposed to be taken to provide internet services at affordable prices tocustomers?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI MILIND DEORA)

(a)&(b) The target for Internet and Broadband subscribers in the country as given in Broadband Policy 2004 and achievements thereof are as follows:

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Year    Internet Subscribers    Broadband Subscribers
Ending  (in million)    (in million)
 Target  Achievement  Target  Achievement
2005 6   6.70    3  0.90
2007 18  10.36   9  3.13
2010 40  18.69   20  10.99
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No target has been fixed on a year to year basis. However, subscriber base for the last three
years, as informed by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is given below:
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Year  Internet Subscribers   Broadband Subscribers
Ending  (in million)    (in million)
2010  18.69    10.99
2011  12.39    13.35
2012  25.33    14.98
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The main impediments which are hindering the growth of internet / broadband are as follows: # Lack of interest by private operators, for broadband network expansion in rural areas, being non-remunerative # Difficulty in laying of OFC network due to issues related to right of way clearances and high cost of right of way charges # High backhaul cost # Low PC penetration # High cost of Customer Premises Equipment (CPEs) # Low literacy levels # Lack of local content

(c) The details of Internet and Broadband service providers in the country other than BSNL and MTNL and the number of connections provided by each of the service providers, state wise as indicated by TRAI at the year ending December, 2012 is placed at Annexure-I. In addition, circle-wise details of broadband subscribers of BSNL and MTNL, as on 31.01.2013 are given in Anncxure-H.

(d) All 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country will be covered under the project over a period of 24 months.

(e)&(f) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has undertaken several schemes for providing broadband/internet services in rural and remote areas at affordable prices. The details of the schemes of USOF are at Annexure-HI.

As per National Telecom Policy, 2012 (NTP 12), there are, inter-alia following provisions, in respect of Broadband:-

Provide affordable and reliable broadband-on-demand by the year 2015 and to achieve 175 million broadband connections by the year 2017 and 600 million by the year 2020 at minimum 2 Mbps download speed and making available higher speeds of at least 100 Mbps on demand.

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 Equipment and an environment for development of relevant applications.

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

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.

To revise the existing broadband download speed of 256 Kbps to 512 Kbps and subsequently to 2 Mbps by 2015 and higher speeds of at least 100 Mbps thereafter.

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 establish appropriate institutional framework to coordinate with different government departments/agencies for laying and upkeep of telecom cables including Optical Fibre Cables for rapid expansion of broadband in the country.

To promote synergies between roll-out of broadband and various Government programs viz e- governance, e-panchayat, MNREGA, NKN, AADHAR. AAKASH tablet etc.

To stimulate the demand of broadband applications and services, work closely with Department of IT in the promotion of local content creation in regional languages which would enhance the investment in All-Internet Protocol (IP) networks including NGN.