

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:109

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IMPLEMENTATION OF NOFN PROJECT

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

(a) the present status of progress of work on National Optic Fibre Network (NOFN) project along with the details of the agencies responsible for execution of the project;

(b) the reasons for inordinate delay in implementation of the project; and

(c) the fresh steps taken by the Government to resolve the differences between the implementing agencies of NOFN Project and ensure expeditious execution of the project?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) Government approved National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project at an estimated cost of about Rs. 20,100 Crore for effective provision of at least 100 Mbps bandwidth in all the estimated 2,50,000 Gram Panchayat (GPs) to be used by all categories of service providers including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on non-discriminatory basis.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) viz. Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) has been established with an objective to create, operate, maintain and manage National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) infrastructure.

NOFN Project is envisaged as a Centre-State joint effort. State Governments are expected to contribute by way of not levying any Right of Way (RoW) charges. This requires suitable tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed by Government of India (GOI), State Governments & BBNL. Tri-partite MoU has been signed with all states and Union Territories except Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep.

The work has been allocated by BBNL to 3 Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Railtel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) for execution of the project.

Survey work has been completed by the 3 CPSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and PGCIL for 2972 block out of 3018 blocks planned for connecting 50,000 Gram Panchayats by March 2015. Tenders for trenching and pipe laying works have been finalized by 3 CPSUs for around 1154 blocks and work has commenced in 514 blocks. About 9128 km of pipe and 5378 km of optical fibre cable has been laid. Purchase orders for procurement of Optical Fibre Cable and electronic transmission equipment have been issued and supply commenced.

(b) The delay is on account of the following reasons:

i) Project is of a mega nature widely dispersed across the country and to reach fibre to the unreached areas, which are rural and remote. Survey work to ascertain the total length of incremental OFC to be laid has been significantly completed and this has been a fairly time consuming process for the 3 participating CPSUs (BSNL, RailTel & PGCIL)

(ii) Supply constraints with a given set of suppliers to meet the vast demands of material requirement of large NOFN project.

(iii) Constraints in timely availability of labour and contractors for trenching and cable laying in different parts of the country given the high volume of work of NOFN at rates within reasonable limits of estimated rates.

(c) There are no major differences between the implementing agencies of NOFN Project. Routine issues are resolved immediately at appropriate level to ensure expeditious execution of the project.