

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:150

ANSWERED ON:24.11.2014

INTERNET CONNECTIONS TO GRAM PANCHAYATS

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

- (a) whether the Government has launched the project for connecting all Gram Panchayats with Internet Broadband Connections in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the allocation of funds made for this purpose and the quantum of funds released so far;
- (c) the number of Gram Panchayats connected with broadband network connections in the country at present, State-wise; and
- (d) the time by which the remaining Panchayats are likely to be connected with broadband Internet?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) 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.

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.

Against an estimated cost of about Rs. 20,100 Crore, Rs. 2,010 Crore has been released by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under this project as on 31.10.2014.

(c) & (d) Work is underway by BBNL and 3 CPSUs for connecting about 50,000 Gram Panchayats with OFC by March 2015 for leveraging broadband network connections in the country. The remaining Panchayats are envisaged to be connected on OFC for leveraging broadband network in a phased manner by December 2016.