

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1770

ANSWERED ON:03.12.2014

NATIONAL OPTIC FIBRE NETWORK

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

- (a) the progress made in setting up the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) launched in 2011, for providing Broadband connectivity to village Panchayats, including the Panchayats that were not covered within the targeted time of two years;
- (b) whether there has been inordinate delay in the implementation of NOFN and the target date for providing broadband connectivity to the Panchayats has again been postponed and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the new target date set by the Government;
- (c) whether the delay in implementation of the project has resulted in cost overrun;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the final cost of the project; and
- (e) the action taken proposed to be taken by the Government for implementation of the project in a time bound manner?

**Answer**

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

(a) Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), has been created on 25.02.2012 for execution of the National Optical Fibre Network Project (NOFN). BBNL has entered into agreement with 3 Central Public Sector Undertakings

(CPSUs) viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Railtel & Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) to utilize their existing optical fiber to implement the work on ground for laying incremental optical fiber for connecting all Gram Panchayats (GPs).

Survey work has been completed by the 3 CPSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and PGCIL for 2972 blocks 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 11411 km of pipe and 6577 km of Optical Fibre Cable

(OFC) has been laid. Purchase orders for procurement of OFC and electronic transmission equipment Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) have been issued and supply commenced.

(b) The delay in implementation of NOFN 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.

Work is underway for implementation by BBNL and 3 CPSUs for connecting all the Gram Panchayats in the country on Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to facilitate leveraging broadband network in a phased manner by December 2016 as follows:

Phase I 50,000 GPs To be connected by March 2015  
Phase II 1,00,000 GPs To be connected by March 2016  
Phase III 1,00,000 GPs To be connected by December 2016

(c) & (d) No, Madam. Government approved NOFN project on 25.10.2011 at an indicative cost of about Rs. 20,100 Crore. While

approving, the Cabinet noted that "Given the complex nature of NOFN, the widespread geographical area and multiplicity of agencies involved, precise estimates cannot be made as of now, since actual cost will depend on per km cost of OFC as well as the length of OFC required for network will be known only after the detailed survey."

Since physical survey to ascertain length of incremental OFC to be laid and tender for procurement of material & execution are partly completed, the final cost of project is yet to be firmed up.

(e) Following steps are being taken for implementation of the project in a time bound manner:

(i) Execution of project in a phased manner to learn and improve from experiences of project implementation.

(ii) Multi-pronged strategy for execution of work being adopted for accelerated implementation of the project.

(iii) Regular monitoring and review of the project at various levels.