

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1553

ANSWERED ON:04.03.2015

TELECOM SERVICES IN HILL STATES

Khanduri AVSM Maj. Gen. (Retd) Bhuwan Chandra;Patil Shri Bheemrao Baswanthrao;Tamta Shri Ajay

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

- (a) whether the telecom and internet services in hill States/regions are low as compared to plains;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, State-wise including Uttarakhand and action taken in this regard;
- (c) whether many blocks and villages in Uttarakhand particularly in hill districts are yet to be provided with telephone and internet services and the mobile signals and internet connectivity is very poor in the State;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken by the Government to expand the mobile and internet service in the State and improve the mobile signal quality and internet connectivity?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) In hilly states, there are about 13942 uncovered villages (16.80%) out of 82960 inhabited villages as compared to 55,669 uncovered villages (9.31%) out of total 5,97,608 inhabited villages in the country that do not have mobile coverage. Village coverage data for hilly States, State-wise is at Annexure-I.

Service Providers including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) have reported following difficulties in providing telecommunication services in hilly areas:

- (i) Low population density and difficult location conditions makes service provision financially unviable.
- (ii) CAPEX (Capital Expenditure) and OPEX (Operational Expenditure) for development of telecom infrastructure in these areas is very high.
- (iii) Lack of adequate telecom backhaul connectivity.
- (iv) Lack of proper supporting infrastructure (road, electricity supply etc.)

(c) to (e) All 95 Block Headquarters (BHQ) in Uttarakhand are covered with Telecom and Internet Services. It is estimated that there are about 1,876 villages out of 15,745 villages as per Census 2011, in Uttarakhand that do not have mobile coverage. Various schemes are being implemented/ planned with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to expand mobile and internet services in Uttarakhand. These include:

(i) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) : NOFN project is planned to connect all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country, including those in Uttarakhand, through optical fibre utilizing existing fibres of PSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and Power Grid Corporation India Limited (PGCIL) and laying incremental fibre wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks, for providing broadband connectivity. The access providers/service providers like mobile operators, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), cable TV operators, content providers can launch various services in rural areas. Various applications for e-health, e-education, e-governance etc. will be provided.

(A) BSNL have finalized tenders for trenching and pipe laying for 20 blocks and for 981 GPs in Uttarakhand Region. (As on 22.02.2015)

(B) 374 km of Permanent Lubricated High Density Polyethylene (PLB HDPE) duct and 264 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid in Uttarakhand Region. (As on 22.02.2015)

(ii) Provision of Mobile service in inhabited uncovered villages of Himalayan States: A scheme to extend financial support from USOF for provisioning of mobile communication services in inhabited uncovered villages of Himalayan States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) not having mobile coverage is under consideration. Work awarded to M/s Telecommunications

Consultants India Ltd (TCIL) for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR). Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) is underway.