

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3470

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INTERNET USERS

Charitra Shri Ram;Chinnaraj Shri Gopalakrishnan;Mahendran Shri C.;P. Shri Nagarajan;Senthilnathan Shri PR.;Udhayakumar Shri M.

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

- (a) whether India has become the 2nd largest internet economy in the world with the prospect of the number of internet users in India likely to cross half a billion in the next three years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the share of data in the overall revenue of telecom operators is likely to rise from 10-12 per cent in 2013 to 35-40 per cent in 2020 and the telecom operators will have to make substantial investment to improve infrastructure;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Union Government has recognized broadband connectivity as a basic necessity and plan to provide broadband on demand at higher speed i.e. at least 100 mega bits per second; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (f) Madam, as per the information provided by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the number of internet including broadband subscribers in the country is 267.39 million, as on 31st December 2014. Further, according to a report 'Internet in India 2014' jointly published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB International, the internet users are estimated to be more than 300 million.

The trend of share of data in the revenue of mobile telecom operators for the recent periods is as given below:

Quarter ending Revenue from data usage as a percent of total revenue from subscribers

June 2013 9.7%
September 2013 11.6%
December 2013 13.2%
March 2014 13.9%
June 2014 15.0%
September 2014 17.1%

Further, one of the objectives of National Telecom Policy-2012 is to 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. Government vide notification dated 18.07.2013 has notified Broadband as a data connection that is able to support interactive services including Internet access and has the capability of the minimum download speed of 512 kbps to an individual subscriber from the point of presence (POP) of the service provider intending to provide Broadband service.

Government is implementing National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project to provide broadband connectivity through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to all the Gram Panchayats in the country (approximately 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats) at an estimated cost of Rs. 20,100 Crore by bridging the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps (megabits per second) bandwidth would be made available at each Gram Panchayat to be used by all the service providers on non-discriminatory basis. Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL), a Central Public Sector Undertaking Unit (CPSU) has been created to execute the project. Work is being implemented by BBNL through 3 CPSUs viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Railtel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.