

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2620
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2014
TELECOM NETWORK IN VILLAGES
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the telecom sector growth is not uniform in urban and rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of villages in the country which are yet to be covered under the telecom network State-wise along with the steps taken/being taken by the Government to bring each and every village under the telecom network;
- (d) whether the telecom sector has urged the Government to provide a clear roadmap to address policy and regulatory issues to improve the health of telecom sector, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the action taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The telecom sector growth in urban and rural areas in the country during last three years is as below:

As on	Rural Tele-density	Urban Tele-density
31st March, 2012	39.22	169.55
31st March, 2013	41.02	146.96
31st March, 2014	43.96	145.78
31st May, 2014	44.40	145.56

The difference between rural and urban teledensity has been reducing over the last three years though at a slow rate. Some of the reasons for non uniform telecom growth in rural areas are:

- (i) Higher Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) and Operational Expenditure (OPEX) with lower average revenue per user (ARPU).
- (ii) Acute shortage of Grid power.
- (iii) Lack of support infrastructure.

(c) As on 31.05.2014, 11,233 Villages out of the 5,93,601 inhabited villages of the country as per Census 2001 are yet to be provided with Village Public Telephones (VPTs) facility. State-wise details are given in Annexure. The remaining 11,233 villages are being covered with VPTs by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) through an ongoing Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme.

National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN): NOFN project is planned to connect all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country through optical fibre utilizing existing fibers of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) viz. BSNL, RailTel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) and laying incremental fiber wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks, for providing broadband connectivity.

Comprehensive telecom development Plan for North Eastern Region (NER): In its meeting held on 13.06.2014, the Telecom Commission recommended a proposal to implement the Comprehensive Telecom development Plan for North Eastern Region (NER). Main thrust of the plan is to provide mobile coverage in identified uncovered villages, seamless mobile coverage along

National Highways and Transmission Media augmentation.

(d) & (e) Government is preparing a plan of action. The details are being formalized.