

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1590
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27TH DECEMBER, 2017**

BROADBAND SERVICES

1590. SHRI HARINDER SINGH KHALSA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of the reach of Optical Fibre Network to provide broadband connections to the urban and rural areas of the country;
- (b) the current level of connections/ connectivity to the urban households of the country;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to make the internet services more affordable to all the people of India and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (d) whether the Government is taking any steps towards prescribing higher threshold of providing minimum broadband speed to the users and if so, whether they are planning to take penal steps to ensure its compliance and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) & (b) Government provides an enabling framework for the expansion of the telecom services in the country. It relies on the market for provision of services in the urban areas. However, specific projects are taken up with funding from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to provide telecom services in commercially unviable areas.

As on 30th September 2017, the total number of internet subscribers are 429.33 million, which comprises of 129.41 million rural subscribers and 299.82 million urban subscribers. Government does not maintain any data on household connectivity.

(c) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN), now renamed as BharatNet, is being implemented to provide broadband services in all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country in phases through optical fibre, radio and satellite media. Last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided in all the GPs (approximately 2,50,000) in the country by providing Access Points(hotspots) in each GP by leveraging the BharatNet infrastructure targeted to be completed by 31.03.2019. As on 17.12.2017, connectivity has been provided to 1,06,585 GPs by laying 2,50,197 km Optical Fibre Cable and 87,836 GPs have been made service ready under the BharatNet project.

(d) Broadband is 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. No decision has been taken to revise the definition of broadband as yet.
