

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.5470
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28th MARCH, 2018**

INTERNET SPEED AND CONNECTIVITY

5470. SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether optical fibre based Internet connectivity and its proper speed is essential for cashless transactions;
- (b) if so, whether the existing internet speed in the country is one of the lowest in the world and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the current spectrum policies do not facilitate achieving universal broadband availability, especially in areas with lower commercial potential and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to address aforementioned issues including internet speed; and
- (d) the other steps taken by the Government to streamline wireless internet connectivity and the progress made so far to boost cashless transactions?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Optical fibre based Internet connectivity is not essential for cashless transactions as optimum internet speed for the same is achievable with or without optical fibre based connectivity.
- (b) As per Akamai's (an international agency) Quarter 1, 2017 report on "The State of Internet", India with an average internet speed of 6.5 Mbps has a global rank of 89.

Internet speed depends on various parameters such as technology deployed, network coverage, number of simultaneous users accessing the internet, connectivity to the website being accessed etc. The speed of mobile internet is further dependent on a number of factors such as distance from Base Transceiver Station (BTS) serving the customer, the number of simultaneous users being served by the BTS, the traffic handled by the BTS etc. As such, the mobile users may experience different speeds at different location and time of usage.

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(c) & (d) As per current spectrum policy, access spectrum is assigned to Telecom Service Providers through auction for the entire licensed service area, which includes rural as well as urban areas. Further, Notice Inviting Applications No:1000/06/2016-WF (Auction) dated 8th August 2016 through which last spectrum auction was carried out, inter-alia, provides for rollout obligations for coverage of Rural Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) also in 2100 Megahertz (MHz), 2300 MHz & 2500 MHz spectrum.

Government has planned the BharatNet project to provide 100 Mbps broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media to be completed by March 2019. Under this project, last mile connectivity is planned to be provided through Wi-Fi or any other suitable technology. Upto 18th March 2018, 268195 Kms of Optical Fibre Cable has been laid and 104813 GPs have been made service ready.

Under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme for setting up Wi-Fi Choupals at 5,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) through Common Service Centre – Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV) of Ministry of Electronics & IT, Wi-Fi Choupals have been installed in all 5000 GPs, out of which service delivery has commenced in 1833 GPs.

Under USOF's other scheme for setting up public Wi-Fi hotspots at BSNL's 25,000 telephone exchanges in rural areas, at 2429 exchanges Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed and service delivery has commenced.

In addition to the above, Government has allocated 965 MHz spectrum through auction in October 2016 to various telecom service providers for access services in the country. Telecom Service Providers are continuously rolling out their networks using this spectrum resulting into increase in internet connectivity and speed in the country.
