GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.6157
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH APRIL, 2018

INTERNET PENETRATION

6157. SHRI P. KUMAR:
        SHRIMATI MEENAKASHI LEKHI:

        Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the internet penetration has increased in rural areas of the country and if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years;

(b)   the internet penetration rate in the country, State/UT-wise;

(c)   the action taken by the Government to increase the coverage and affordability of internet services;

(d)   whether the existing regulatory mechanism is unfavourable for the expansion of Wi-Fi networks and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e)   the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a)   As per "The Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators" reports published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the internet penetration (Internet Subscribers per 100 population) in the rural areas of the country for the Quarter ending December'2015, December'2016 and December'2017 was 12.86, 13.08 and 14.89 respectively.

(b)   Licensed service area wise internet penetration rate (internet subscribers per 100 population) in the country as on 31stDecember' 2017, as published by TRAI in its report dated 26th March 2018 on "The Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators" for the period October – December' 2017 is enclosed in **Annexure.**

(c)   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 spectrum available with them, which is resulting into proliferation of affordable internet services and widening of internet coverage.

Further, for rural areas, 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 in a phased manner. As on 25.03.2018, by laying 2,68,963 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), a total of 1,13,964 GPs have been connected, out of which 1,04,889 Gram Panchayats have been made Service Ready.

(d)   No Madam. The existing regulatory mechanism is not unfavourable for the expansion of Wi-Fi networks in the country.

(e)   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 5000 GPs, of which service delivery has commenced in 1833 GPs.

Further, 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.

As part of BharatNet Project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided at all the GPs in the country. The project is targeted to be completed by March 2019.

Licensed service area wise internet penetration (internet subscribers per 100 population) in the country as on 31stDecember, 2017

License Service Area	number of internet subscribers per 100 population
Andhra Pradesh	38.28
Assam	25.58
Bihar	16.83
Delhi	125.86
Gujarat	44.36
Haryana	37.77
Himachal Pradesh	54.12
Jammu & Kashmir	39.70
Karnataka	47.30
Kerala	52.42
Madhya Pradesh	21.80
Maharashtra	46.77
Mumbai	
North East	36.51
Orissa	24.23
Punjab	54.84
Rajasthan	31.44
Tamil Nadu	47.99
Uttar Pradesh (East)	22.17
Uttar Pradesh (West)	
Kolkata	30.76
West Bengal	
Total (Overall Internet penetration in the country)	34.42

Notes: Data/information for Andhra Pradesh includes Telengana, Madhya Pradesh includes Chhatisgarh, Bihar includes Jharkhand, Maharashtra includes Goa, Uttar Pradesh (West) includes Uttarakhand, West Bengal includes Sikkim and North-East includes Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura states.

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