

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5186  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2019**

**MOBILE NETWORK IN EASTERN GHATS**

**5186. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that many areas of the district of Kandhamal and many other regions in the hilly terrain of the Eastern Ghats do not receive adequate mobile network connectivity from either the Private Telecom Service Providers or Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL);
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (c) the time by which the telecom connectivity and network coverage are likely to be improved in the aforesaid areas and the expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, LAW & JUSTICE AND  
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

(a) to (c) Yes Sir, Some villages in Kandhamal and hilly terrains of Eastern Ghats do not have mobile network connectivity from either the Private Telecom Service Providers or Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). As per Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), the difficult geographic terrain, sparsely populated villages with very low population size, lower level of economic activities etc. pose techno-commercial challenges in making available mobile services on universal basis. Further lack of feasibility of cost-effective back-haul transmission is also a barrier against provision of the services. Major portion of Kandhamal district is covered with forests. Out of 2587 villages in the district of Kandhamal, 768 villages are covered by telecom services and 1819 villages are uncovered. As per the data collected from the telecom service providers in year 2018, total number of uncovered inhabited villages in the States constituting the hilly terrains of Eastern Ghats, namely Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu & Kerala (including the information received from field units of the department) is attached at **Annexure –I**.

Mobile coverage in the uncovered villages in the country, is being provided in a phased manner by the Government and TSPs. Following projects are being implemented for providing/facilitating telecom services in inhabited uncovered villages:

- (i) Under Left Wing Extremism affected areas Phase-II project, Government has approved installation of 3465 mobile towers (total outlay of Rs. 5024 Crore) for providing mobile

connectivity including 252 mobile towers in Odisha. Under Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Phase-I project, 23 towers have been installed in Kandhamal District.

(ii) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) in the country, including Kandhamal and hilly terrain of the Eastern Ghats. As on 04.07.2019, by laying 3,45,779 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), a total of 1,31,392 GPs have been connected, out of which 1,20,562 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been made Service Ready. In addition, 854 GPs have been made Service Ready on satellite media.

Kandhamal District has about 160 GPs. As on 04.07.2019, 141 GPs have been connected on OFC, out of which 136 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been made Service Ready.

As part of this project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is being provided at all the GPs in the country. Further, the Digital Communications Commission (DCC) on 13.06.2019 has approved to award the work of provisioning of 2 Wi-Fi Access Points (APs) in each of the 90,000 GPs of BharatNet Phase-I in all the States (including Kandhamal District of Odisha and hilly terrain of the Eastern Ghats), except where Wi-Fi APs are provided under USOF schemes.

Annexure referred to in reply of para (a) to (c) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5186 to be answered on 24th July, 2019 raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Shri Achyutananda Samanta regarding "Mobile Network in Eastern Ghats"

**No. of inhabited villages without mobile services & information related to the states of Eastern Ghats**

Sl. No.	State/UT	No. of inhabited villages without mobile services	Information related to Eastern Ghats
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2745	There are 2562 uncovered villages in the Eastern Ghats area of Andhra Pradesh (9 districts)
2.	Karnataka	869	The Eastern Ghats are not prominent in Karnataka
3.	Kerala	Nil	-
4.	Odisha	9940	Major portion of Kandhamal district is covered with forests. Out of 2587 villages in the district of Kandhamal, 768 villages are covered by telecom services and 1819 villages are uncovered.
5.	Tamil Nadu	83	In Tamil Nadu Easter Ghats, three hilly regions viz. Jawadu Hills, Kalrayan Hills and KolliHills are available with 104 inhabited villages and out of these 31 villages are not provided with mobile coverage.

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