

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2126
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH MARCH, 2020**

COMMUNICATION PROBLEM IN DARJEELING AND KALIMPONG AREAS

2126. SHRI RAJU BISTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that people in the hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong face severe communication problem with regard to mobile and internet network and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to achieve the dream of digital India in the said region??

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

(a) to (b) 610 Villages out of 616 inhabited villages of district Darjeeling and Kalimpong are covered by mobile services. Out of which 50 villages are covered by 2G services only and remaining villages are covered by 3G/4G service covering around 99.07% of populations. Telecom Service Provider (TSP) wise number of Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) operational in districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong are at **Annexure-I**. Generally, the areas covered by 3G & 4G mobile BTSs are having better internet speed in comparison to the areas covered by 2G mobile BTSs. The download/upload speed of mobile internet is dependent on number of factors such as technology (2G/3G/4G-LTE), closeness to the cell serving the customer, the number of users being served by the cell, the traffic handled by the cell, the user equipment/mobile handset used by the customer etc. Further, BSNL is providing landline internet services from 15 exchanges and to improve the internet services all exchanges have been converted to NGN, except 3 which will be converted to NGN by this financial year. Moreover, to improve mobile coverage 76 number of 4G BTSs have also been planned by BSNL.

The Government has planned to cover all uncovered villages in a phased manner, utilizing the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Government prioritized to reach remote areas of the country such as North-Eastern States, Islands, Himalayan States, Western Border States and more importantly the Left Wing Extremism affected areas in the first phase.

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. Under Bharat Net Phase-I project 24 GPs out of 26 GPs have been made Service Ready and 124 GPs have been planned under Bharat Net Phase –II project for the Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas. This infrastructure is to be utilized by TSP on non- discriminatory manner for provision of internet connectivity in GPs/ rural areas.

Government has taken several policy initiatives to facilitate infrastructure growth for delivery of quality services. These include permitting trading/sharing/liberalisation of spectrum, permitting passive & active infrastructure sharing, notification of Right of Way Rules 2016, making available government land/buildings for installations of towers etc. Telecom Service Providers also install mobile towers and BTSs on continuous basis to improve coverage and/or capacity of their networks based on their techno-commercial requirements.

Annexure-I

Annexure referred to in reply of para (a) to (b) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2126 to be answered on 4th March, 2020 raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Raju Bista, regarding "Communication Problem in Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas"

TSP wise number of BTS operational in districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong

Sr. No.	TSP name	Number of Operational BTSs	
		Kalimpong district	Darjeeling district
1	Airtel	170	1085
2	RJIO	151	1198
3	VIL	116	812
4	BSNL	19	285
Total		456	3380
