(b)   if so, whether the Ministry carried out the entire process of spectrum allocation in an arbitrary manner ignoring the advice of other Ministries;

(c)   if so, whether any responsibility has been fixed by Government on such huge losses in spectrum allocation; and

(d)   if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) DoT has not received any such report of Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG).

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Status of internet connectivity in rural areas

340.   SHRTMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   whether 84 per cent of villages in 7 States are not aware of the internet's existence;

(b)   the current status of internet connectivity in rural areas; and

(c)   the steps, if any, Governement is taking to increase rural internet awareness and promote internet usage in these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) No, Sir.

(b)   The current status of internet connectivity in rural areas is as follows:

(i)   Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is providing subsidy support under Rural Wireline Broadband Scheme in rural and remote areas for providing Broadband services through which internet connectivity can be accessed by the rural customers. Under this scheme, a total of 2, 10, 902 Broadband connections have been provided.

(ii)   Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has made more than 24,000 rural exchanges as Broadband enabled.

(iii)   BSNL has installed around 1000 WiMax towers in rural areas to extend the Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer (DSLAM) coverage.

(iv)   BSNL has given rural Broadband to more than 6,70,000 customers and covered more than 1,69,000 villages with broadband.

(v)   Department of Information Technology (DIT) has planned to open Common Service Centres (CSCs) in the country to cater e-services for around 6 lakh villages for which 1,00,000 CSCs are being established across the country. BSNL has already covered 42,745 CSC locations through Broadband on various technologies.

(vi)   BSNL is providing Broadband connections to Gram Panchayats. Out of total 2,42,069 village panchayats, 97,392 village panchayats locations have already been covered till September, 2010 through Broadband connectivity.

(c)   As part of the agreement under the Rural Wireline Broadband Scheme, BSNL is making efforts through various means such as newspapers, leaflets/pamphlets, road shows, advertisements, etc. to sensitize the people about this broadband scheme through which Internet can be accessed.

Report of Sam Pitroda Committee

341.   SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Sam Pitroda Committee has submitted its report on BSNL;

(b)   if so, the important recommendations of the committee and the action taken on the same; and

(c)   if the report is not yet submitted, the status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The important recommendations of the Sam Pitroda Committee are as under:

•   Focus on selection of the best professionals from the market at market rates.

•   Appoint an eminent person from the private sector as the Chairman.

•   Separate the post of the Managing Director/CEO(from CMD).

•   Change the Board composition to seven directors [one internal(MD/CEO), one non executive chairman, two government nominee and three external directors].