

been registered under Information Technology (IT) Act in Maharashtra and J&K, respectively during the last three years. States apply the laws uniformly depending upon the facts and other evidences in the case. However, no specific incident of different treatment being given in different States with reference to the cases under IT Act has been reported to the Government.

Impact of telecom towers on human health

208. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the impact of telecom towers on the health of people living in the vicinity thereof;
- (b) if not, whether Government is planning to conduct an impact assessment study on the health of the people living close to the towers;
- (c) whether it is a fact that incidence of cancer has increased manifold after the intensive use of mobile phones;
- (d) whether Government has issued any guidelines for setting up telecom towers for mobile service providers in a populous locality; and
- (e) the international standards in fixing a telecom tower for mobile services in an inhabitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) to (c) World Health Organization (WHO) in its Fact Sheet No. 304, May 2006 on Electromagnetic Fields and Public Health (Base Stations and Wireless Technologies) has concluded that considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak RF Signals from base stations and wireless networks caused adverse health effects. From all evidence accumulated so far, no adverse short or long term health effects have been shown to occur from the RF Signals produced by based stations.

There is no conclusive evidence available so far to establish adverse effect on human health due to Electromagnetic Field (EMF) radiations emitted from mobile phone. The review of available study literature does not establish conclusive evidence on the safety or risk of radio frequency EMF radiation emitted from mobile phone

particularly with regard to cancer. Studies are on going to find out adverse health effects of radio frequency Electromagnetic Field from mobile phone use, if any.

However, Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) under Department of Science and Technology has constituted a Expert Committee/Task Force in September, 2013, to evaluate the R&D proposal on the possible impact of EMF radiation exposure from mobile towers and handsets on life (humans, living organism, flora and fauna and environment) and related initiatives.

(d) Department of Telecommunications has issued advisory guidelines for State Governments for issue of clearance for installation of mobile towers effective from 01.08.2013.

(e) WHO has recommended that "National authorities should adopt international standards to protect their citizens against adverse levels of RF fields. They should restrict access to areas where exposure limits may be exceeded." WHO has referred to the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) which has prescribed the levels limiting EMF emission from Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) as safe for general public. DoT adopted the EMF radiation limits prescribed by ICNIRP in 2008 which was further reduced to 1/10th of the safe limit prescribed by ICNIRP with effect from 01.09.2012. All telecom service providers have to comply with these prescribed limits of EMF radiation from mobile towers.

National Optical Fibre Network project

209. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the progress under the National Optical Fibre Network project, including the number of Gram Panchayats connected to the Broadband network so far;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government has missed the October, 2013 deadline;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for the delay; and

(d) the time period within which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL), the Special purpose vehicle constituted for implementation