a committee to examine various aspects of Net Neutrality, which has submitted its report. Comments and suggestions have been invited on the report through MyGov portal. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is also engaged in consultation process covering the issues related to Net Neutrality.

Based on the committee report, comments and suggestions received and recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Government will take a considered decision on various aspects of Net Neutrality.

(d)   Not applicable in view of above.

Bill payment gateways of MTNL

2145. SHRI GULAM RASOOL BALYAWI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   whether it is a fact that the bill payment sites or gateways of MTNL are very slow, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(b)   the remedial measures being taken by the Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has informed that users of its payment sites/ gateways may sometimes experience delays/slow-speed due to heavy internet traffic. MTNL keeps watch on its system and takes required steps to upgrade the application or hardware, whenever needed.

MTNL has also informed that a second payment gateway, besides its already existing Bill Desk Payment gateway, is being operationalized in August, 2015 in its Mumbai Unit.

Availability of high speed internet services in rural areas

2146. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   the number of households in rural areas that currently have access to internet services;

(b)   the details of Government initiatives to increase availability of high speed internet services in rural areas; and

(c)   the measures taken to ensure digital literacy among students and adults in rural areas and the current status of such efforts?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) conducted a sample survey on 'Social Consumption: Education' during January, 2014 - June, 2014. Survey results showed that 16.10% of the Indian households in rural areas, with at least one member of age 14 years and above, had access to internet facility.

(b) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project was planned to connect all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by bridging the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks for providing broadband connectivity. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps bandwidth was to be provided in all the estimated 2,50,000 GPs for utilization by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis including internet Service Providers. As on 02.08.2015, OFC laying in 24,156 Gram Panchayats are completed.

In order to review the strategy and approach towards speedy implementation of National Optical Fibre Network, Government of India constituted a Committee on 14th January, 2015. The Committee submitted its report on 31st March, 2015. The Committee, *inter-alia*, recommended that the project be renamed as BharatNet to reflect the national aspiration to establish a highly scalable network infrastructure accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to realize the vision of Digital India, in partnership with the States and the private sector.

(c) National Digital Literacy Mission with the objective to make 10 lakh persons digitally literate throughout the country was approved by the Government on 04.03.2014. Subsequently, an expanded scheme under Digital India Programme namely 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' has been approved by the Government on 09.12.2014 with the objective to make additional 42.5 lakh persons digitally literate in a period of four years. Both these schemes are being implemented concurrently. Out of the total target of 52.50 lakh persons to be trained under both the schemes, 5 Lakh candidates are to be trained by industry, Non-Governmental Organisations and others through their own resources/under Corporate Social Responsibility and training of remaining 47.50 lakh candidates would be supported by Government. The total outlay of both the schemes is ₹ 477.02 crore with a grant-in-aid of ₹ 444.56 crore. At present 7,22,156 candidates are enrolled out of which 4,78,177 candidates have been trained and 1,25,705 candidates have been certified by 735 training partners.

4G facilities by MTNL/BSNL

2147. SHRI K. N. BALAGOPAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: