

TERM Cells, a total of 2,57,265 BTSs (*i.e.* more than 99.9 %) were found compliant to EMF radiation exposure norms.

(b) Several representations have been received by Government on health hazards from EMF emissions of telecom towers and mobiles. The apprehensions raised in the representations have been mostly related to setting up of mobile towers in vicinity of residential areas, schools, hospitals etc. However, as explained above, EMF radiations from a mobile tower, which are below the safe limits prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO, have no convincing scientific evidence of causing adverse health effects. DoT has prescribed stricter precautionary norms for exposure limit for the Radio Frequency Field (Base Station Emissions) which are ten times more stringent than the existing limits prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO. Further, Government of India has taken adequate steps to ensure that TSPs strictly adhere to these prescribed norms.

Various court cases have also been filed in this regard. However, several High Courts have dismissed petitions, where the mobile tower installations were challenged on grounds of health effects of EMF radiations.

As on 31.01.2016, TERM Cells have received around 2964 representations/complaints regarding perceived health hazards from EMF emission of telecom towers and mobiles from various sources such as online Public Grievance (PG) Portal, postal letters, e-mails, District Telecom Committee meetings etc. Out of these complaints/representations, as on 16.02.2016 a total of 2941 number of complaints/representations have been suitably disposed off by TERM Cells. TERM Cells carried out EMF testing to ascertain the level of EMF radiation preferably in the presence of complainant and it was observed that in most of the cases, the EMF radiation levels are within safe EMF limits as prescribed by DoT. In all these cases, the complainants have been suitably advised.

Poor mobile network coverage of BSNL

390. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether BSNL has lost about two crore wireless and wireline subscribers during last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for poor mobile network coverage capacity and quality of services of BSNL; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to increase its subscriber base by improving network coverage and quality of services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has added a total of 61,34,732 mobile subscribers and lost 18,81,673 Wireline subscribers during the last one year from Feb., 2015 to Jan., 2016.

(c) and (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) monitors the Quality of Service (QoS) of all the telecom service providers including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). As per the performance monitoring report of TRAI for the quarter ending December, 2015, for cellular mobile telephone services 2G, BSNL's performance is generally comparable with other service providers. As regards Basic services (Wireline), BSNL is meeting all the parameters in all the service areas.

So far as the enhancement of mobile network coverage, capacity and quality of services is concerned, BSNL upgrades and augments its network on techno-economical consideration on a continuous basis. BSNL has taken several steps to improve its network and quality of service. Some of the steps are as follows:

- BSNL has planned to install 10,510 3G Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) and 14,232 2G BTSs under Phase-VII GSM expansion for 15 Million lines. It has also planned to install additional 9600 3G BTSs and 5300 old BTSs in North and South Zone. This will also include replacing of 5300 old BTSs of GSM Phase I, II and III. An approximate capacity of 5 million shall be added in the GSM network of North Zone and South Zone. BSNL has already commissioned over 16.42 million lines. Out of the planned BTSs, 9829 (3G) BTSs and 12,491 (2G) BTSs are radiating (Total 22,320). This will improve 2G and 3G network coverage and data capability of 3G network.
- BSNL has planned to implement ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) as one of the important IT initiative in two phases *i.e.* Phase-I Proof of Concept (POC) and Phase-2 Rollout. The ERP has been implemented in all the 49 units including eight Proof of Concept (POC) Circles .
- During this Five Year Plan (2012-17), BSNL has planned to make the entire wire line customer base network IP enabled. Next Generation Network (NGN) equipment based on the latest architecture are planned to be deployed gradually to replace the entire Circuit Switched equipments/ Digital Telephone Exchanges.
- BSNL has set wireline call centres for the customers of landline and broadband at Dehradun, Ajmer and Bangalore and traffic from all circles has been migrated to these call centres. These call centres are accessible through toll free number 1500 (from BSNL number) and 18003451500 (from other operator numbers).
- BSNL has launched various customer centric initiatives like Night free calling, Free Roaming, increased minimum speed of broadband to 2 Mbps etc.

In addition, Department of Telecommunication (DoT) has also taken up several projects to improve the telecom network in rural and remote areas through Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Some of these projects are as follows:

- To provide better mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, USOF has awarded to BSNL to install 2199 (BTSS).
- USOF is implementing a comprehensive telecom developing plan for the North East Region (NER) at the estimated cost of ₹ 5336.18 crores. This NER scheme has following components:
 - (i) Provision of mobile services in uncovered villages.
 - (ii) Provision of seamless mobile coverage along the National Highways.
 - (iii) Augmentation of Transmission media.
- USOF is augmenting the telecom network in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.
- National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) is being implemented to connect 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats with broadband.

Auction of spectrum in 2016-17

391. SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is proposing auction of spectrum in the Financial Year 2016-17;

(b) how is Government ensuring that the design of the auction is such that it receives maximum receipts; and

(c) the projected receipt for Government from auction of spectrum during 2016-17?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The Government has not yet decided the dates for conduct of next round of auction of spectrum.

(b) The Government had set itself the following objectives in last auction held in March, 2015:

- Obtain a market determined price of spectrum through a transparent process;
- Ensure efficient use of spectrum and avoid hoarding;
- Stimulate competition in the sector;
- Promote rollout of the respective services;
- Maximise revenue proceeds from the auctions within the set parameters.