

(d) At present 14193 GDSs are working in the Odisha Circle. These GDSs would be benefited after implementation of the recommendation of the Committee.

**Report of the Committee on Net Neutrality**

2477. SHRI DHARMAPURI SRINIVAS:

DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the expert Committee constituted on Net Neutrality has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the details of recommendations made by the Committee;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government has taken a decision to adopt the recommendations made by the Committee for implementation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) In order to have proper policy response with respect to various issues involved in Net Neutrality, Government had constituted a committee to examine various aspects of Net Neutrality in January, 2015. In its report submitted on 28.05.2015, the committee has recommended various measures including adherence to core principles of Net Neutrality.

The major recommendations of the committee related to Net Neutrality, *inter alia*, are as under:

- (i) User rights on the Internet need to be ensured so that TSPs (Telecom Service Providers)/ISPs (Internet Service Providers) do not restrict the ability of the user to send, receive, display, use, post any legal content, application or service on the Internet, or restrict any kind of lawful Internet activity or use.
- (ii) A clause, requiring licensee to adhere to the core principles of Net Neutrality, as specified by guidelines issued by the licensor from time to time, should be incorporated in the license conditions of TSPs/ISPs.
- (iii) Legitimate traffic management practices may be allowed but should be tested against the core principles of Net Neutrality.

- (iv) Managed services are a necessary requirement for businesses and enterprises, and suitable exceptions may be made for the treatment of such services in the Net Neutrality context.
- (v) Content and application providers cannot be permitted to act as gatekeepers and use network operations to extract value in violation of core principles of Net Neutrality, even if it is for an ostensible public purpose.

(c) and (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has also submitted its recommendations on Net Neutrality to Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on 28th November, 2017. The recommendations are being examined by the Government. Government is committed to the fundamental principles and concept of Net Neutrality and strives for non-discriminatory access to Internet for all citizens of the country. DoT shall finalise the policy direction on various aspects of Net Neutrality after taking into account the recommendations of Committee on Net Neutrality, TRAI recommendations on the subject and comments and suggestions received in this regard.

#### **BharatNet project in Odisha**

2478. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR SWAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the objectives of BharatNet project and whether the same have been achieved, if not, the actions being taken by the Ministry in this regard;
- (b) the number of Gram Panchayats in Odisha under NOFN/BharatNet project which have been provided with the high-speed broadband connectivity infrastructure; and
- (c) the plans of the Ministry to connect all Gram Panchayats with high-speed broadband in Odisha?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) BharatNet project, which is a national asset, is to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country. For service delivery, non-discriminatory access to the network is to be provided to Service Providers. The project is being implemented in a phased manner, and Phase-I of the project to connect 1 lakh GPs has been completed in December, 2017. Phase-II of the project to connect the remaining GPs is to be completed by March, 2019.

- (b) In Odisha, as on 11.03.2018, a total of 2,402 Gram Panchayats have been made Service Ready by laying 9,618 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC).