

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to meet the above needs in a time-bound manner?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) The Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) install additional mobile towers to improve coverage and/ or capacity of their networks based on their techno-commercial requirements on a regular basis. A total of 72,000 additional mobile towers were installed in the country during the financial year 2018-19. No authentic estimate of addition in mobile tower base in future is available with the Department.

(b) There were 5,57,543 mobile towers in the country as on 30.06.2019.

(c) In order to facilitate expansion of telecommunication services, the Department of Telecommunications has initiated a series of policy initiatives and development programs as below:-

- (i) Making available sufficient spectrum for mobile services including auction of 965 MHz across different bands (700, 800, 900, 1800, 2100, 2300 and 2500 MHz bands) in 2016.
- (ii) Allowing spectrum sharing, trading and liberalisation of administratively allocated spectrum.
- (iii) Permitting sharing of active as well as passive infrastructure by the TSPs for achieving higher utilisation efficiency.
- (iv) Notification of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 dated 15.11.2016 for enabling development of underground infrastructure (optical fibre) and over-ground infrastructure (mobile towers).
- (v) Periodic review of expansion of mobile networks and related improvements carried out by TSPs.

#### **Mobile phone penetration**

3661. SHRI A.K. SELVARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mobile phone penetration in the country is set to rise to 85 per cent to 90 per cent by 2020;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that half of the smartphone owners in the country are going to subscribe to network data service by 2020; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) and (b) As per Performance Indicator Report dated 10.07.2019 for the quarter January, 2019 to March, 2019 released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), tele-density for Wireless services is 88.46% as on 31st March, 2019. The tele-density is expected to improve with the further increase in coverage.

(c) and (d) More than 52% of the total mobile telecom users have subscribed to data services. The information regarding subscription of data services by smartphone owners is not maintained.

#### **Poor services of BSNL**

‡3662. SHRI HARNATH SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is disillusionment among consumers of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) due to its poor services and the consumers are opting the service of private companies and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) the details of action plan proposed to make the services, particularly the internet services of BSNL, exemplary?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) monitors the performance of telecom service providers including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) against the benchmark for various Quality of Service (QoS) parameters laid down by TRAI by way of QoS regulations issued from time to time, through Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs).

As per PMR issued by TRAI for the quarter ending March 2019, BSNL is meeting all the benchmarks for Basic (Wireline) and Broadband Services throughout the country. For Cellular Mobile Telephone Service, BSNL is meeting the benchmark for all the parameters in all of its Licensed Service Areas (LSAs) except for the parameter for call drop in West Bengal service area only.

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‡Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.