DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 49. The questioner is absent. Are there any supplementaries?

*49. *[The Questioner was absent.]*

Internet and Wi-Fi facilities to villages

*49. SHRI VIJAY PAL SINGH TOMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government has provided internet and Wi-Fi facilities to all the villages of the country for the benefit of the farmers to increase their knowledge about the agriculture sector and keep them informed about the new developments in the agriculture sector;

(b)   if so, the measures/action being taken by Government under this issue; and

(c)   if not, by when this target would be completed to provide internet and Wifi facilities to all the villages across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband/internet connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. A total of 1,28,376 GPs have been made Service Ready as on 07.11.2019. A total of 2 lakh GPs are targeted to be completed by March, 2020.

As part of BharatNet project,the Last Mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, to access broadband/internet services, is to be provided at all GPs in the country. Accordingly, work of provisioning of 2 Wi-Fi Access Points (APs) for about 1.25 lakh GPs under Phase-I is under implementation. As of now,Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed in 45,769 GPs and services are being provided in 16,151 GPs.

Internet is being currently accessed mainly through mobile wireless 2G,3G and 4G technologies which at present cover more than 95 per cent of population of the country.

As per data collected from the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) in 2019, it is estimated that out of total 5,97,618 inhabited villages (as per the Census 2011) in the country, 5,69,897 are covered by mobile services. Mobile coverage in remaining villages is being provided by the Government and Telecom Service Providers in a phased manner.

In addition, the following initiatives/actions have been taken by the Government towards provisioning and improving broadband/internet and Wi-Fi services in the rural areas of the country:

(i)   Under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme, 25,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots are being set up using the infrastructure of telephone exchanges of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in rural areas of the country.

(ii)   A Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region to provide mobile coverage in uncovered villages and along with National Highways is under implementation.

(iii) Under Left Wing Extremist (LWE) Phase-II project, installation of 2217 mobile towers is planned for providing mobile connectivity covering the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(iv)   Mobile connectivity in 354 villages of uncovered border areas including Ladakh and Kargil Region, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and other priority areas.

(v)   Mobile connectivity to cover uncovered villages and along National Highway (NH 223) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

श्री हरनाथ सिंह यादव: सभापति जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि उत्तर प्रदेश के कितने ग्राम वाई-फाई इंटरनेट सेवा के लिए चयनित हुए हैं और उनमें से कितने ग्रामों में उपकरण लगा दिए गए हैं? मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि कितने ग्रामों में वाई-फाई इंटरनेट सुविधा प्रारंभ होकर बंद हो गई है अथवा बंद जैसी है?

श्री धोत्रे संजय शामराव: चेयरमैन सर, हर गाँव के लिए वाई-फाई इंटरनेट सुविधा प्रदान करना हमारी सरकार का प्रथम उद्देश्य है। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि पूरे देश में 2G, 3G और 4G के माध्यम से लगभग 95 प्रतिशत लोगों को यह सुविधा दी जा सकती है। देश के सभी गाँवों में यह सुविधा मिले, खासकर ग्राम पंचायतों में last mile connectivity मिले, इसके लिए हम ढाई लाख ग्राम पंचायत में optic fiber cable Radio/Satellite media का प्रावधान कर रहे हैं। इनमें

से करीब एक लाख चालीस हजार गाँव अभी तक कनेक्ट हुए हैं। माननीय सदस्य ने उत्तर प्रदेश के बारे में जो जानकारी माँगी है, मैं उनको यह जानकारी भेज दूँगा, क्योंकि यह सवाल में पूछा नहीं गया है।

MS. DOLA SEN: Sir, we appreciate the Central Government's target to provide internet and wi-fi facilities to all the villages of the country though in cities also, we fail to get it. Obviously, this will be done through PSUs like BSNL and MTNL. How long the workers of BSNL will do their jobs for the country without salary and wages for the last eleven months continuously?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is relevant but not relevant to this question.

MS. DOLA SEN: Sir, it is relevant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I also said the same thing. You did not hear me.

श्री धोत्रे संजय शामराव: सर, माननीय सदस्या ने जो सवाल पूछा, मैं बड़ी विनम्रता से कहना चाहता हूँ कि बीएसएनएल में सितम्बर, 2019 तक वेतन का भुगतान किया जा चुका है और एमटीएनएल में अगस्त, 2019 तक वेतन का भुगतान किया जा चुका है। सभी लोगों के मन में आशंकाएं थीं कि बीएसएनएल का क्या होगा, एमटीएनएल का क्या होगा? मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि हमारी सरकार ने इसके लिए एक revival package बनाया है। उसमें बहुत सारे प्रावधान हैं, जैसे एक वीआरएस के लिए स्कीम है, दूसरा monetization है, बाद में 4G के लिए भी स्पैक्ट्रम का allocation भी है, इसमें ये सब चीज़ें हैं। इससे निश्चित ही लाभ होगा। मैं यह भी चाहूँगा कि इसमें आप सब लोगों का सहयोग मिले।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

MS. DOLA SEN: *

MR. CHAIRMAN; No, please. It is not going on record. It is unnecessary.

SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Sir, as the Minister is aware, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is identifying and building a database of all the farmers around the country based on the coverage of the farmers under insurance scheme, etc. My question to the Minister is this. Is his Ministry coordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to ensure that every farmer that is coming under the insurance scheme coverage also has access to Wi-Fi and internet?

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*Not recorded.

श्री धोत्रे संजय शामराव: चेयरमैन सर, हमारा एक बहुत बड़ा ambitious programme है। इसमें हमारे जो कॉमन सर्विस सेंटर्स हैं, वे हर जगह सिर्फ फार्मर्स के लिए ही नहीं हैं, बल्कि वेलफेयर की जितनी भी स्कीम्स हैं, उनका भी बहुत अच्छा इम्प्लिमेंटेशन उनके through हो रहा है। इसमें कृषि मंत्रालय की ओर से देश के सभी कृषि विज्ञान केन्द्रों के माध्यम से फार्मर्स को advisories दी जाती हैं। हमारी जो Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee है, उसमें जो नाम वगैरह हैं, उनको भी हमने साथ में लिया हुआ है और इसका बहुत अच्छा इम्प्लिमेंटेशन हो रहा है।

Appointment of experts directly through advertisement

†*50. SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)   whether it is a fact that Government is directly appointing experts in different Ministries/Departments through advertisement;

(b)   if so, the details thereof and the number of such appointments, department-wise and post-wise;

(c)   whether reservation policy is being implemented in these appointments;

(d)   whether it is also a fact that reservation policy has been ignored by giving priority to certain castes in such appointments; and

(e)   the number of candidates appointed from General Category, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in such appointments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (e) Government has, from time to time, appointed some prominent persons for specific assignments in Government, keeping in view their specialized knowledge and expertise in the domain area. Based on the recommendations of Sectoral Group of Secretaries on Governance in its report submitted in February, 2017 and report of NITI Aayog regarding three year Action Agenda for 2017-18 to 2019-20, Government decided to undertake lateral recruitment of 10 Joint Secretaries in 10 Ministries/Departments.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.