

Broadband penetration in urban and rural areas

493. SHRI RAJEEV SATAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the broadband penetration in urban and rural areas of the country separately, State/UTwise;

(b) whether the broadband penetration in rural areas is quite less as compared to urban areas and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the telecom regulator has asked industry stakeholders about reasons for poor broadband proliferation in India despite being the most affordable in the world;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the stake holders; and

(e) the corrective steps taken by Government to boost broadband proliferation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) Information on Broadband penetration in urban and rural areas of the country, State/UT-wise, is not maintained by the Department. Number of Broadband subscribers in rural and urban areas of the country, Licensed Service Area-wise as on 31.03.2020 is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) Broadband Penetration (*i.e.* number of Broadband subscribers per 100 population) in rural and urban areas of the country as on 31.03.2020 is given below:—

Broadband penetration as on 31.03.2020

Rural	Urban	Total
29.2	93.0	51.0

The above data indicates that Broadband penetration is better in urban areas compared to rural areas. Several challenges are faced in the rollout of Broadband networks in rural areas. These arise due to comparatively lower level of infrastructure availability in rural areas than in urban areas, low population density and the consequent lack of a viable business case.

(c) and (d) TRAI has released a Consultation Paper on 'Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband Speed' on 20.08.2020. In the

Consultation Paper, a query has been raised to the industry stakeholders that "Even though mobile broadband services are easily available and accessible, what could be the probable reasons that approximately 40% of total mobile subscribers do not access data services." They have also been requested to suggest the policy and regulatory measures, which could facilitate increase in mobile broadband penetration. The comments on the Consultation Paper have been invited from the stakeholders by 21.09.2020 and counter comments by 05.10.2020.

(e) The Government notified National Digital Communications Policy - 2018 with a strategic objective of 'Provisioning of Broadband for All' so that the resulting benefits of wide-spread, equitable and inclusive growth are enjoyed by all. The Policy aims to empower citizens by effectively bridging the digital divide. In order to operationalize 'Broadband for All', the Government has launched 'National Broadband Mission' on 17.12.2019 with a vision to enable fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide for digital empowerment and inclusion, provide affordable and universal access of Broadband for all. The National Broadband Mission, *inter-alia*, aims to facilitate universal and equitable access to Broadband services for growth and development throughout the country, especially in rural and remote areas. Implementation of the National Broadband Mission is expected to catapult India to the next phase of digital revolution thereby enabling inclusive participation of all citizens to create a truly digital society. For expansion of Broadband services in rural and remote areas of the country, the Government has also launched the following schemes with funding from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF):—

- (i) BharatNet project to provide Broadband connectivity in all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country.
- (ii) Public Wi-Fi hotspots at the 25,000 rural telephone exchanges of BSNL are being provided.
- (iii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region.
- (iv) Laying of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and Andaman and Nicobar Islands for providing high bandwidth connectivity to Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(v) Providing mobile connectivity in 354 villages of uncovered areas of Bihar, J&K, Ladakh, Border areas and other priority areas.

(vi) Provisioning of 4G based mobile service in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Statement

*Number of Broadband subscribers in rural and urban areas of the country,
Licensed Service Area - wise*

Sl. No.	Name of Licensed Service Area (LSA)	Name of State/UT	No. of Broadband Subscribers (in lakh)	
			Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh Telangana	234.6	312.9
2.	Assam	Assam	76.8	55.7
3.	Bihar	Bihar Jharkhand	272.9	166.5
4.	Delhi	Delhi Gujarat	5.7	373.4
5.	Gujarat	Daman and Diu Dadar and Nagar Haveli	126.9	303.9
6.	Haryana	Haryana	63.6	98.4
7.	Himachal Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh	36	20.5
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	Jammu and Kashmir Ladakh	30.9	40.4
9.	Karnataka	Karnataka	152.4	270.9
10.	Kerala	Kerala Lakshadweep	100.3	148.1

1	2	3	4	5
11.	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh Chhattisgarh	175.9	271.1
12.	Maharashtra	Goa Maharashtra (excluding Mumbai)	229	354.1
13.	Mumbai	Mumbai Arunachal Pradesh Meghalaya	14.7	265.5
14.	North East	Mizoram Nagaland Manipur Tripura	36.7	37.7
15.	Odisha	Odisha	111.8	65.2
16.	Punjab	Punjab Chandigarh	78.3	167.7
17.	Rajasthan	Rajasthan	183.5	211.5
18.	Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu Puducherry	122.7	352.4
19.	Uttar Pradesh (East)	Eastern Uttar Pradesh	253	241.7
20.	Uttar Pradesh (West)	Western Uttar Pradesh Uttarakhand	120.4	228.7
21.	West Bengal	Andaman and Nicobar Sikkim West Bengal (Excluding Kolkata)	146.3	154.2
22.	Kolkata	Kolkata	13.5	147.7
		INDIA	2586.1	4288.3

Source: TRAI's data