

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 329  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

**SETTING UP OF WI-FI NETWORKS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY**

**329 SHRI RAJEEV SATAV:**

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has recently approved the setting up of Wi-Fi Networks all over the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the objective behind the move;
- (c) the number of data centres to be set up to launch the massive Wi-Fi network and the criteria fixed by Government for setting up data centres;
- (d) whether Government is way behind in achieving the target of providing internet to people as envisaged in National Digital Communications Policy, 2018;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the corrective steps taken/being taken by Government in this regard?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

- (a) Yes, Sir. The proposal of the Department for Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks based on Wireless Access Network Interface (WANI) framework has been approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held on 9/12/2020.
- (b) As per the WANI framework, it is envisaged that last mile broadband connectivity will be through a network of public Wi-Fi access points. The backhaul requirement for these Wi-Fi access points to be met by internet bandwidth from the telecom service providers/internet service providers. Under the distributed architecture and unbundling of functions, the WANI eco-system consists of following players:
  - **Public Data Office (PDO):** To establish, maintain, and operate WANI compliant Wi-Fi Access Points and deliver broadband services to subscribers.
  - **Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA):** An aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to Authorization and Accounting.

- **App Provider:** To register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
- **Central Registry:** To maintain, in accordance with the WANI architecture and specifications, the details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs.

Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi networks in PDOA/PDO based model inter-alia is expected to result into following benefits:

- i. PDOs are expected to have similar effects on the economy as Public call Offices (PCOs) did when they first came up almost twenty-five years ago.
- ii. Increased penetration – PDOAs will allow smaller players to provide Wi-Fi services without having to incur heavy costs. This will lead to an exponential increase in the number of PDOs and Wi-Fi hotspots in the country. With increasing reach in urban and especially rural areas, more and more people will be able to access Wi-Fi networks.
- iii. Increased employment - Introduction of PDO/PDOA based model for public Wi-Fi provision can develop like a small-scale industry and just as in the case of PCOs, shop owners and micro-entrepreneurs will be able to start this business. Setting up of a PDO will require a small infrastructure cost and it can be run along with other businesses. This arrangement will encourage village level entrepreneurship and provide strong employment opportunities, especially in rural areas.

(c) The WANI framework does not involve setting up of data centres.

(d) to (f) The National Digital Communications Policy 2018 (NDCP-2018) was notified on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2018 with a strategic objective of providing Broadband for all. Internet is being currently accessed mainly through mobile wireless technologies which at present cover more than 95% of the total population of the country. Setting up of public Wi-Fi Hotspots by entrepreneurs under WANI framework will further enhance the penetration of internet services in the country.

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