

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1932
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05th AUGUST, 2021**

DELAY IN COMPLETION OF BHARATNET PROJECT

1932 Shri Sanjay Singh:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that BharatNet project is running behind schedule in both phase one and phase two of its implementation;
- (b) if so, the details of the delay in project and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) did not impose any penalty on Common Service Commission(CSC) for delays in completion of BharatNet work on the set deadlines; and
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) & (b) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. As on 09.07.2021, a total number of 1,57,919 GPs have been made Service Ready in the country.

The implementation of the Phase-I (Revised workfront) is almost complete, as 1,18,649 GPs have been made Service Ready out of the targeted 1,20,392 GPs. The Phase-II is under implementation and 39,270 GPs have been made Service Ready. The scope of BharatNet has been recently extended upto all inhabited villages beyond GPs with the target of completion by August, 2023. The implementation of the project is affected mainly on account of:

- (i) GPs are widely dispersed across remote corners of the country, covering difficult terrains (including Hilly/ Rocky) and also difficulty for access in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas;
- (ii) Phase-I of the project began only in the second half of 2014 due to field survey of GPs and pilot testing of the technology model.

(iii) In Phase-I, only one media (i.e. underground Optical Fibre Cable) has been used to cover GPs, and Right of Way (RoW) issues impacted the implementation.

(iv) Under BharatNet Phase-II, about 65,000 GPs in 8 States are being implemented by the State Governments under State-led model. The implementation of the same is not meeting the targeted time-lines and is adversely affecting the completion of the Project.

(v) Since March 2020, pursuant to lockdown and movement restrictions due to COVID-19, the progress of the project has been adversely affected.

(c) & (d) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has not assigned any work to Common Service Commission (CSC).

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC-SPV), a Special Purpose Vehicle under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) with Secretary, MeitY as its Chairman, has been awarded the work of maintenance (i.e. Operation & Maintenance of incremental Optical Fibre Cable network, First Line Maintenance of equipment and supporting infrastructure) of the BharatNet Phase-I. The provisioning of Wi-Fi Services in about 1.10 lakh GPs has also been assigned to CSC-SPV. Out of the aforesaid GPs assigned to CSC-SPV, it is also providing Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections to 5 Government Institutions per GP in 77,000 (approx.) GPs.

However, CSC-SPV has not been assigned the task of laying the Network between Block Headquarters and its Gram Panchayats under Phase-I and Phase-II of BharatNet.
