



**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
COMMUNICATIONS AND  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(2024-25)**

**EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
(DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
(2025-26)**

**EIGHTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*March, 2025/ Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)*

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON**  
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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**  
**(2024-25)**

**(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)**  
**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS**  
**(DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS)**  
**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS**  
**(2025-26)**

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 21.03.2025*

*Laid in Rajya Sabha on 20.03.2025*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**

*March, 2025/ Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)*



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**Composition of the Standing Committee on Communications and  
Information Technology (2024-25)\***

**Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson  
Lok Sabha**

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Shri Anil Baluni
4. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
5. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
6. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer
7. Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav
8. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
9. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
10. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
11. Ms. Mahua Moitra
12. Shri G. Kumar Naik
13. Shri Shafi Parambil
14. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
15. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
16. Shri Radheshyam Rathiya
17. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
18. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
19. Shri Devesh Shakya
20. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
21. Shri Rajesh Verma

**Rajya Sabha**

22. Shri Saket Gokhale\*\*
23. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
24. Shri Ilaiyaraaja
25. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
26. Dr. Sasmit Patra
27. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
28. Shri S. Niranjan Reddy
29. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
30. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
31. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                     |   |                      |
|----|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal   | — | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | — | Director             |
| 3. | Shri Rajesh Mohan   | — | Deputy Secretary     |

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*\*Committee constituted w.e.f. 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 vide Para No.833 of Bulletin Part-II dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.*

*\*\* Shri Saket Gokhale has been nominated vide Para No. 853 of Bulletin Part –II dated 03<sup>rd</sup> October, 2024.*

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25), having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (2025-26) of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications).

2. The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25) was constituted on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2024. One of the functions of the Standing Committee, as laid down in Rule 331E of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, is to consider the Demands for Grants of the Ministry concerned and make a Report on the same to the Houses.

3. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) for the Financial Year 2025-26 which were laid on the Table of the House on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) for appearing before the Committee and furnishing the information that the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants.

6. The Committee would also like to place on record their appreciation for the assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

7. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in Part-II of the Report.

**New Delhi;**

**18 March, 2025**

**27 Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)**

**DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY,**

**Chairperson,**

**Standing Committee on**

**Communications and Information  
Technology.**

## **Report**

### **Part-I**

#### **I. Introductory**

1. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is, inter-alia, responsible for Telecom Policy; Licensing and Coordination matters relating to telegraph, telephones, telecom wireless data; international cooperation in matters connected with telecommunications, promotion of standardization, Research & Development (R&D) in telecommunications; and promotion of private investment in the sector. DoT is also responsible for frequency management in the field of radio communication in close coordination with the international bodies. DoT enforces wireless regulatory measures by monitoring wireless transmission of all users in the Country.

2. According to the Department there are various attached, Subordinate and Field Offices of DoT namely, DBN (Digital Bharat Nidhi), Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) which is the technical wing of DoT, Director General Telecom (DGT), Controller General of Communication Accounts (CGCA), Wireless Monitoring Organisation (WMO) which performs various functions relating to spectrum management, National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT) which is the telecom training institute of DoT, National Centre for Communication Security (NCCS) which works to establish and operationalize a framework of telecom security testing and certification within the Country, the National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF) and National Operations Control Centre (NOCC). There are several PSUs and autonomous bodies under DoT like BSNL, MTNL, ITI Limited, TCIL, BBNL (merged with BSNL), and C-DOT.

#### **Priority Schemes**

3. The following are the priority schemes of the Department during FY 2025-26:

- i. BharatNet (Phase-I, Phase-II and Amended BharatNet Programme);
- ii. 4G Saturation Project;
- iii. Schemes for Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Himalayan States, Western Border States and Aspirational Districts and (354 uncovered villages, 502 uncovered villages in Aspirational districts, 7287 uncovered villages in Aspirational Districts)
- iv. Border Out Posts (BOP)/ Border Intelligence Post (BIP)
- v. Scheme for Mobile Communication Services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas (LWE-I upgradation and O&M)

- vi. LWE Phase-II;
- vii. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region; and
- viii. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands

## **Indian Telecom Scenario**

4. The Secretary Telecom while deliberating upon the Telecommunications landscape stated as follows:-

“ If you look at the overview of the telecom sector, India has emerged as a Vishwa Bandhu and the best-performing nation in the telecom sector. If you look at the broadband speeds, within one year, we have jumped 39 ranks. We went from 59th to 20th position. In regard to the broadband speed, we are standing roughly between China and USA. In the case of number of Internet connections, after China, we have about 95 crore connections we may be in the second position in the world. In the mobile data consumption, during the last one year, the growth has been roughly 12 percent. We may be number one in the entire world in terms of data consumption. If you look at the number of subscribers, it is again may be after China we are the second largest consumers of telecom consumption in the world.”

5. The digital revolution has ushered in a remarkable transformation in the realm of internet and broadband connectivity. Total Telephone subscriptions rose to 11877.3 lakhs as on 30.11.2024 from 9330.2 lakhs as on 31.03.2014 with a growth of 27.30 %. The number of mobile connections reached to 1145.0 Lakhs as on 30.11.2024. The tele-density which was 75.23 % as on 31.03.2014 has reached 84.36% as on 30.11.2024. Urban Telephone connections rose to 6602.6 Lakhs as on 30.11.2024 from 5552.3 lakhs as on 31.03.2014 , a growth of 18.92 % while the growth in rural telephone connections was 39.62%, which is more than double of urban increase rising from 3777.8 lakhs as on 31.03.2014 to 5274.7 lakhs as on 30.11.2024. The rural tele density jumped from 44% as on 31.03.2014 to 58.23% as on 30.11.2024. Internet connections jumped from 2525.9 lakhs as on 31.03.2014 to 9715.0 lakhs as on 30.09.2024, registering a growth of 286.14 %. Broadband connections rose from 608.7 lakhs as on 31.03.2014 to 9443.9 lakhs as on 30.09.2024, growing by 1451.49%. Average revenue realisation per subscriber per GB wireless data reduced to Rs 9.12 at the end of March , 2024 from Rs 268.97 at the end of December 2014, a reduction of more than 96.61%. Average Wireless Data usage (in GB) per data user per month increased to 19.30 GB at the end of March , 2024 from 0.27 GB at the end of December, 2014. The number of Mobile Base Receiver Stations (BTS) are 29.49 lakhs as on 30.11.2024. The number of mobile towers are 8.14 lakhs as on 30.11.2024.

## II. Implementation Status of Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifth Report on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications)

6. The Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) was presented to Parliament on 18.12.2024. The Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of Department of Telecommunications are awaited.

## III. DoT Budget (2025-26)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) presented Demand No.13 for the Financial Year 2025-26 on 11.02.2025. The Actuals under Revenue and Capital Sections for the years 2021-22 to 2024-25(Dec 2024), Proposed, Budget Estimate (BE), Revised Estimate (RE) and Actuals for 2024-25 up to Dec 2024, proposed and BE during 2025-26 under Revenue and Capital are as under:

(Rs. In Crores)

Major Head	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Proposed	2024-25 BE	2024-25 RE	2024-25 Actual (upto Dec. 2024)	2025-26 Proposed	2025-26 BE
Revenue Section	36771.84	66280.44	33067.19	53832.02	38475.54	57169.79	26864.48	42557.88	35851.50
Capital Section	6397.74	56228.62	62455.72	74138.70	93152.44	82646.52	7445.26	64322.86	73784.76
Grant Total	43169.58	122509.06	95522.91	127970.72	131627.98	139816.31	34309.74	106880.74	109636.26

### Revenue Section

7. The Revenue expenditure of the Department in FY 2024-25 and 2025-26 are as under:-

BUDGET AT A GLANCE 2024-25 AND 2025-26				Annexure-I	
REVENUE SECTION		(Referred to in Para 3.1 & 3.1.1)		(Rs in Cr)	
S. No.	Head Name	Major Head	BE 2024-25	RE 2024-25	BE 2025-26
1	Secretariat	3451	9.98	9.16	9.78
2	Directorate Genl. Admn.		341.39	392.01	375.21
3	Telecom Engineering Centre		46.00	39.18	41.14
4	Administrator, USOF Fund		11.20	30.24	18.88
5	TERM Cells		232.72	257.23	269.95
6	Controller of Communication Accounts		201.34	239.59	252.88
7	Centralized Monitoring System		37.97	68.37	67.64
8	NTIPRIT		35.12	38.19	51.65
9	Controller General of Communication Account		15.77	16.32	16.48
10	DG (T)		13.75	11.06	11.81
11	NICF		13.59	13.18	16.77
12	<b>Total</b>	<b>3451</b>	<b>958.83</b>	<b>1114.53</b>	<b>1132.19</b>
13	<b>Pension &amp; Other Retirement Benefits-DoT</b>	<b>2071</b>	<b>17510.00</b>	<b>19306.00</b>	<b>20133.42</b>
14	<b>2552-North Eastern Area</b>	<b>2552</b>	<b>1060.00</b>	<b>750.00</b>	<b>640.00</b>
15	<b>Labour Employment and Skill Development</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.40</b>
16	Wireless and Planning Coordination	3275	20.86	27.70	22.63
17	Monitoring Services		54.14	58.01	47.85
18	Other schemes of USOF Subsidies		7817.40	5403.00	4619.00
19	USOF Professional Services		0.00	15.00	25.00
20	Compensation for Research & Development (R&D)		400.00	200.00	400.00
21	Total Compensation to Service Pro.		8217.40	5618.00	5044.00
22	Total Schedule caste sub Plan(USOF+ C-DoT)		879.80	622.50	531.20
23	Total -Tribal Area Sub Plan(USOF+C-DoT)		455.80	322.50	275.20
24	Transfer to Reserve Fund		1000.00	17500.00	4000.00
25	TDIP		34.46	55.83	39.74
26	Payment of Interest on MTNL Bonds (including Principal		3980.71	3980.71	0.00
27	Viability Gap Funding to BSNL for providing telecom connectivity during Shri Amarnath Yatra		1.00	1.00	1.00
28	Implementation of VRS of BSNL & MTNL		0.01	3822.16	0.01
29	Special assistance for Swachhta Action Plan		2.00	2.00	2.00
30	International Co-operation		141.10	192.90	48.73
31	CDOT		387.00	387.00	309.60
32	TRAI		100.00	108.00	130.00
33	TDSAT		23.20	26.98	28.94
34	Training		12.00	27.50	65.78
35	Champion Service Sector Scheme		70.00	33.02	1.10
36	Production Linked Incentive Scheme		1806.34	1450.97	1965.50
37	Operational Cost of Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telcom Equipment (MTCTE)		1.20	1.20	1.20
38	Operation and Maintenance Charges of the Indigenous 5G Test Bed		2.92	4.51	0.00
39	Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to BSNL		1200.00	1200.00	1200.00
40	Waiver of Guarantee Fee BSNL/MTNL		556.37	556.37	231.01
41	<b>Total</b>	<b>3275</b>	<b>18946.31</b>	<b>35998.86</b>	<b>13945.49</b>
	<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>38475.54</b>	<b>57169.79</b>	<b>35851.50</b>

8. The Committee further examined the revenue expenditure pattern of the Department for FY 2024-25 and observed shortfall in expenditure under Revenue Section in the Budget of the Department for the year 2024-25. The Revenue Expenditure in the year was estimated to be 38475.54 Cr in BE 2024-25 which was increased to Rs 57169.79 in RE 2024-25. The Department could spend only Rs 26864.48 Cr till December 2024 which is less than 50 % of the Revised Estimates for 2024-25.

9. When the Committee sought reasons for such a shortfall, the Department in their written replies informed as under:-

“The actual expenditure of Revenue section is Rs. 26,864.48 Crores as on 31/12/2024 against allocation of Rs. 57,169.79 Crores in RE 2024-25. The RE 2024-25 has been allocated in the month of January 2025 only and all round efforts are being made for full utilisation of allocated fund.” ( Page No 2, Reply to LoP)

10. The Department proposed Rs 42557.88 Cr as Revenue Expenditure in the Budget 2025-26 . However, the proposed expenditure was scaled down and Rs 35851.50 Cr has been allocated in the Demands for Grants.

### **Capital Expenditure**

11. The Capital Expenditure of the Department in FY 2024-25 and 2025-26 are as under:

<b>BUDGET AT A GLANCE 2024-25 &amp; 2025-26 (Contd.)</b>					
	<b>Capital Section</b>				<b>(Rs in Cr)</b>
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Head Name</b>	<b>Major Head</b>	<b>BE 2024-25</b>	<b>RE 2024-25</b>	<b>BE 2025-26</b>
1	<b>Capital Outlay on NE Area (OFC)</b>	4552	0.00	131.60	145.63
2	<b>Capital Outlay on NE Area (BharatNet)</b>	4552	850.00	650.00	2200.00
3	<b>ITI Revival (Equity Investment)</b>	4859	168.00	59.00	105.50
4	Capital Infusion for BSNL/MTNL	5275	82916.20	72027.65	33757.58
5	<b>Direction &amp; Adminstration</b>	5275	27.81	66.64	162.89
6	Major Work Building		0.00	4.00	4.00
7	<b>Other Communication Services</b>	5275			
8	Major Work Building (WMO)		10.00	10.00	4.00
9	WPC		163.24	76.44	25.00
10	Monitoring Services		51.76	99.08	50.00
11	Provision for Schedule Caste Sub Plan (BharatNet)		705.50	539.50	1826.00
12	Provision for Tribal Area Sub Plan		365.50	279.50	946.00
13	OFC Based Network for DS		0.00	1184.36	1310.62
14	BharatNet		6579.00	5031.00	17028.00
15	Transfer to Reserve fund		1000.00	1000.00	16000.00
16	Wireless Sets and Equipments (TEC)		0.17	0.37	0.37
17	Training Institute for Communication Finance (NICF)		10.58	28.58	62.46
18	Telecom Testing and Security Certification Centre		6.00	11.65	8.00
19	Telecom Computer Emergency Response Team (T-Cert)		8.54	167.00	73.00
20	Sampann 2.0		0.00	0.00	5.00
21	TRAI Building		10.00	22.00	1.00
22	Digital Intelligence Unit Project		85.00	85.71	52.00
23	MTCTE		0.20	0.20	0.20
24	Prevention of Spoofed Incoming International Calls System 'CIOR'		38.76	16.00	7.50
25	Unified Portal		0.00	5.01	10.00
26	Loans to MTNL on invocation of Government Guarantee		156.18	1151.23	0.01
	<b>Total Capital Section</b>		<b>93152.44</b>	<b>82646.52</b>	<b>73784.76</b>
	<b>Total Capital &amp; Revenue Section (Gross)</b>		<b>131627.98</b>	<b>139816.31</b>	<b>109636.26</b>

**12.** The Budget and Expenditure statement upto December 2024 of the Revenue and the Capital Section is placed as under:

<b>Annexure-III (Ref para 3.1.1)</b>				
<b>Budget and Expenditure statement upto Dec 2024 (Revenue Section)</b>				
	<b>Revenue Section</b>			<b>(Rs in Crore)</b>
<b>Major Head</b>	<b>Head Name</b>	<b>RE 2024-25</b>	<b>BE 2025-26</b>	<b>Expenditure upto Dec' 24</b>
<b>3451</b>	Secretariat	9.16	9.78	5.26
	Directorate Genl. Admn.	392.01	375.21	217.99
	Telecom Engineering Centre	39.18	41.14	26.33
	Administrator, USO Fund	30.24	18.88	12.82
	TERM Cells	257.23	269.95	161.49
	Controller of Communication Accounts	239.59	252.88	159.25
	Centalized Monitoring System	68.37	67.64	29.27
	NTIPRIT	38.19	51.65	24.91
	Controller General of Communication Account	16.32	16.48	11.89
	DG (T)	11.06	11.81	8.14
	NICF	13.18	16.77	7.87
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1114.53</b>	<b>1132.19</b>	<b>665.22</b>
<b>2071</b>	<b>Pension &amp; Other Retirement Benefits-DoT</b>	<b>19306.00</b>	<b>20133.42</b>	<b>15295.65</b>
<b>2552</b>	<b>North Eastern Area</b>	<b>750.00</b>	<b>640.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>2230</b>	<b>Labour Employment and Skill Development</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.11</b>
<b>3275</b>	Wireless and Planning Coordination	27.70	22.63	16.84
	Monitoring Services	58.01	47.85	39.54
	Other schemes of USOF Subsidies	5403.00	4619.00	3096.59
	USOF Professional Services	15.00	25.00	0.00
	Compensation for Research & Development(R&D	200.00	400.00	92.56
	Total Compensation to Service Pro.	5618.00	5044.00	3189.15
	Total Schedule caste sub Plan(USOF+ C-DoT)	622.50	531.20	31.12
	Total -Tribal Area Sub Plan(USOF+C-DoT)	322.50	275.20	448.37
	Transfer to Reserve Fund	17500.00	4000.00	416.67
	TDIP	55.83	39.74	8.99
	Payment of Interest on MTNL Bonds(Including Principal)	3980.71	0.00	3971.45
	Viability Gap Funding to BSNL for providing telecom connectivity during Shri Amarnath Yatra	1.00	1.00	0.00
	Implementation of VRS of BSNL & MTNL	3822.16	0.01	891.71
	Special assistance for Swachhta Action Plan	2.00	2.00	0.61
	International Co-operation	192.90	48.73	80.13
	CDOT	387.00	309.60	327.75
	TRAI	108.00	130.00	71.00
	TDSAT	26.98	28.94	15.00
	Training	27.50	65.78	6.40
	Champion Service Sector Scheme	33.02	1.10	2.93
	Production Linked Incentive Sheme	1450.97	1965.50	13.75
	Operational Cost of Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE)	1.20	1.20	1.25
	Operation and Maintenance charges of the Indigenous 5G Test Bed	4.51	0.00	1.08
	Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to BSNL	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00
	Waiver of Guarantee Fee BSNL/MTNL	556.37	231.01	169.76
<b>3275</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>35998.86</b>	<b>13945.49</b>	<b>10903.50</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Total Revenue Section</b>	<b>57169.79</b>	<b>35851.50</b>	<b>26864.48</b>

ANNEXURE-III (Contd..)				
	CAPITAL SECTION			(Rs in Crore)
		RE 2024-25	BE 2025-26	Expenditure upto Dec'24
4552	Capital Outlay on NE Area (OFC)	131.60	145.63	0.00
	Capital Outlay on NE Area (BharatNet)	650.00	2200.00	0.00
4859	ITI Revival (Equity Investment)	59.00	105.50	0.00
5275	Capital Infusion for BSNL/MTNL	72027.65	33757.58	4619.03
	Dte & Administration-	66.64	162.89	8.93
	Major Work Building	4.00	4.00	0.00
	<b>Other Communication Services</b>			
	Major Work Building (WMO)	10.00	4.00	3.89
	WPC	76.44	25.00	75.79
	Monitoring Services	99.08	50.00	65.50
	Provision for Schedule Caste Sub Plan (BharatNet)	539.50	1826.00	0.00
	Provision for Tribal Area Sub Plan (Bharat Net)	279.50	946.00	105.97
	OFC Based Network for DS	1184.36	1310.62	0.00
	BharatNet	5031.00	17028.00	2099.57
	Transfer to Reserve fund	1000.00	16000.00	416.67
	Wireless Sets and Equipments (TEC)	0.37	0.37	0.02
	Training Institute for Communication Finance (NICF)	28.58	62.46	7.06
	Telecom Testing and Security Certification Centre	11.65	8.00	1.76
	Telecom Computer Emergency Response Team (T-Cert)	167.00	73.00	8.54
	Sampann 2.0	0.00	5.00	0
	TRAI Building	22.00	1.00	0
	Digital Intelligence Unit Project	85.71	52.00	29.25
	Mandatory Testing and certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE)	0.20	0.20	0.00
	Prevention of Spoofed Incoming International Calls System (CIOR)	16.00	7.50	3.28
	Unified Portal	5.01	10.00	0.00
	Loans to MTNL on invocation of Government Guarantee	1151.23	0.01	0.00
	<b>Total Capital Section</b>	<b>82646.52</b>	<b>73784.76</b>	<b>7445.26</b>
	<b>Total Capital &amp; Revenue Section (Gross)</b>	<b>139816.31</b>	<b>109636.26</b>	<b>34309.74</b>

The amount provided for MH- 2552- North Eastern Area is reappropriated to functional Head 32750010301- Compensation to Service Providers and 32750018801- Centre for Development of Telematics head from expenditure are booked under this Head.

\*\*The amount provided for MH- 4552- North Eastern Area is reappropriated to functional Head 52750080003- OFC Based Network for Defence Services and 52750010105- Bharat Net from expenditure is booked under this Head.

13. The Scheme- wise proposed allocations, BE, RE and Actual Expenditure for the year 2024-25 and 2025-26 is given below:  
(Rs. In Crores)

Name of Schemes/Programmes	Annual Plan 2024-25					Annual Plan 2025-26				
	Proposed by DoT	BE	RE	Actual Exp. Upto Dec. 2024	%age of utilization w.r.t. RE	Proposed by DoT	BE	RE	Actual Exp.	%age of utilization w.r.t. RE
<b>Central Sector Schemes</b>										
<b>A. IEBR</b>										
BSNL	0.00	500.00	500.00	474.53	94.91	0.00	500.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
MTNL	150.00	150.00	100.00	36.00	36.00	85.00	85.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
ITI LTD.	100.00	100.00	29.21	0.00	0.00	12.61	12.61	N/A	N/A	N/A
C-DOT (IR)	150.00	150.00	150.00	61.83	41.22	150.00	150.00	0.00	0.00	N/A
BBNL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
TCIL	0.00	3.03	18.70	3.56	19.04	0.00	102.20	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total IEBR (A)</b>	<b>400.00</b>	<b>903.03</b>	<b>797.91</b>	<b>575.92</b>	<b>72.18</b>	<b>247.61</b>	<b>849.81</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	N/A
<b>B. GBS</b>										

Compensation to Service Providers for creation and augmentation of Telecom Infrastructure – USOF	10100.00	10100.00	7000.00	3528.83	50.41	6000.00	6000.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compensation to R & D - Research & Development	400.00	400.00	200.00	92.56	46.28	400.00	400.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
BharatNet	15000.00	8500.00	6500.00	2205.54	33.93	22000.00	22000.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Defence Spectrum – Optical Fibre Cable Based Network for Defence Services	0.00	0.00	1315.96	0.00	0.00	1553.94	1456.25	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>25500.00</b>	<b>19000.00</b>	<b>15015.96</b>	<b>5826.93</b>	<b>38.80</b>	<b>29953.94</b>	<b>29856.25</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>DOT Projects/Schemes</b>										
<b>Wireless Planning &amp; Coordination/Monitoring Services</b>										
(a) Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC)	228.86	184.10	104.14	92.63	88.95	91.98	47.63	N/A	N/A	N/A
(b) Monitoring Services (WMO)	238.67	115.90	167.09	108.93	65.19	192.81	101.85	N/A	N/A	N/A
Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC)	0.17	0.17	0.37	0.02	5.41	0.37	0.37	N/A	N/A	N/A
Technology Development & Investment Promotion	34.46	34.46	55.83	8.99	16.10	55.24	39.74	N/A	N/A	N/A

(TDIP)										
Viability Gap funding to BSNL for providing telecom connectivity during Shri Amarnath Yatra	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Telecom Testing & Security Certificate Centre (TTSC)	9.45	6.00	11.65	1.76	15.11	8.00	8.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Telecom Computer Emergency Response Team (T-Cert)	8.54	8.54	167.00	8.54	5.11	97.00	73.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indigenous 5G Connectivity Test Bed	0.00	2.92	4.51	1.08	23.95	0.00	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Provision of Champion Services Sector Scheme - Promotion of Innovation and Incubation of Future Technologies for Telecom Sector	70.00	70.00	33.02	2.93	8.87	1.10	1.10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme to Promote Telecom and Networking Products	1806.34	1806.34	1450.97	13.75	0.95	2830.00	1965.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Digital Intelligence Unit	85.00	85.00	85.71	29.25	34.13	70.00	52.00	N/A	N/A	N/A

Projects										
Prevention of Spoofed incoming international calls system 'CIOR'	38.76	38.76	16.00	3.28	20.50	10.00	7.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unified Portal	0.00	0.00	5.01	0.00	0.00	25.62	10.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
IEC Media	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sampann 2.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.39	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total – DOT Schemes/Projects</b>	<b>2521.25</b>	<b>2353.19</b>	<b>2102.30</b>	<b>271.16</b>	<b>12.90</b>	<b>3413.51</b>	<b>2307.69</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Total GBS (B) (SCHEMES)</b>	<b>28021.25</b>	<b>21353.19</b>	<b>17118.26</b>	<b>6098.09</b>	<b>35.62</b>	<b>33367.45</b>	<b>32163.94</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

14. As per submissions by the Department during the oral evidence before the Committee, the spending pattern revealed a mixed execution pace. While, **BSNL & MTNL Revival Plan (₹72,028 Cr RE 2024-25, ₹10,228 Cr spent, 14%, Capex (₹8,609 Cr)** is fully utilized, **Spectrum Cost (₹61,800 Cr)** remains entirely unspent (0%), **AGR Dues (₹1,619 Cr)** are fully utilized. **DBN (BharatNet) (₹6,500 Cr RE, ₹3,145 Cr spent, 48%)**-, indicating inadequate implementation. The **Low Utilization Areas** are **OFC Network for Defence (₹1,316 Cr RE, ₹448 Cr spent, 34%)**, **WMO (Machinery & Vehicles) (₹99 Cr RE, ₹67 Cr spent, 67%)**, **NICF Training (₹102 Cr RE, ₹15 Cr spent, 15%)**, **TTSC (₹12 Cr RE, ₹6 Cr spent, 50%)**, **T-CERT (₹167 Cr RE, ₹50 Cr spent, 30%)**. The **Total Expenditure (₹80,495 Cr RE, ₹14,175 Cr spent, 18%)** , non-utilization of more than half of allotted precious fund.

The **DBN (BharatNet) project**, aimed at expanding rural broadband, has utilized only 48% of its revised allocation, indicating lackadaisical execution pace. Other crucial sectors such as **OFC Network for Defence Services (NFS)** and **WMO (Motor Vehicles, Machinery & Equipment)** have seen only 34% and 67% expenditure, respectively. Similarly, training-related allocations, including **NICF Training (15%)** and **TTSC (50%)**, remain underutilized.

The **Pension (including incremental pension)**, which holds the largest allocation, has recorded **82% utilization**. The **Payment of Principal amount of MTNL Bonds** and **Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to BSNL** have both achieved **100% expenditure** which is praise worthy.

The **DBN (Other than BharatNet)** has spent only **53%** of its revised estimate. Similarly, **DBN R&D - TTDF**, which focuses on research and development, has used only **50%** of its allocated funds. The **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme**, aimed at encouraging telecom manufacturing, has seen **only 8% utilization**, which is disappointing.

On the other hand, **C-DOT (81%)** and **establishment expenses (70%)** have shown spending patterns with **Salaries (97%)** been nearly fully utilized and **Interest on MTNL Bonds**, however, has seen only **41% expenditure**. Other segments, such as **International Cooperation (21%)** and **Champion Service Sector (34%)**, have seen minimal spending.

Overall, **75% of the total budget has been spent**. The Committee note with concern that significant underspending has been in critical areas like the **PLI Scheme, DBN R&D, and International Cooperation**.

### Revenue Receipts

15. The main sources of revenue receipts of the Department are as follows:  
**License Fee:**

(i) As per the Clause 18.2.1 of License Agreement, “An annual License fee as a percentage of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) shall be paid by the Licensee service-area wise, for each authorized service from the effective date of the respective authorization. The License fee shall be 8% of the AGR, inclusive of USO Levy which is presently 5% of AGR”.

(ii) **Spectrum Auction Receipts:** Since 2010, Access Spectrum in ‘IMT’ bands for providing commercial mobile services is being auctioned to Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). The reserve prices of spectrum in the spectrum auctions are decided by the Government after considering TRAI’s recommendations. Successful bidders in the auction are given the option of making an upfront payment and the balance amount in annual installments.

(iii) **Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC):** This is levied as a percentage of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) earned by TSPs through use of Spectrum. Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) are payable on a quarterly basis by TSPs i.e. they share a percentage of the revenue they earn through use of the spectrum with the Government w.e.f Sep 2021, SUC for spectrum acquired through auction has been reduced to zero. Other sources are amounts paid at the time of spectrum liberalization, merger & acquisitions, spectrum assignments to captive users, broadcasting services etc.

16. Details of Revenue Receipts of the Department from 2020-21 to 2025-26 are as follows:-

(Rs.In Crores)

Items	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual(as on 31/12/2024)	2025-26 Proposed	2025-26 BE
License fee	16614.36	20316.28	36363.17	13991.41	27300	27300
SUC	7511.71	5743.62	13065.18	2305.15	3500	3500
Spectrum Auction/administratively Allotted spectrum	60814.06	37816.00	42617.89	41452.56	44744.27	44744.27
Other Sources	887.94	959.27	-1386.98	-185.52	1317.75	1317.75
Total	85828.07	64835.17	90659.26	57563.6	76862.02	76862.02

17. When asked to elaborate on the Revenue target during 2024-25 and on shortfalls, if any, in achieving the targets during 2024-25, the Ministry stated as follows:-

**License Fees:**

- i. The estimated Revenue Receipts in respect of License Fee for FY 2024-25 is Rs. 25,501 Cr.
- ii. As on 31.12.2024, the Actual Revenue Receipts in respect of License Fee for FY 2024-25 is Rs. 13991.41 Cr.
- iii. There has not been any shortfalls till date in achieving the targets during FY 2024-25.

**Spectrum:**

The total revenue target of 2024-25 in r/o Spectrum is Rs.1,04,167.64 Cr. The details of anticipated receipts from January 2025 to March 2025 are as follows:

(Rs. in crores)

Nature of Receipts	Revenue Receipts Up to December 2024 (FY 2024-25)	Anticipated receipts from January 2025 to March 2025
Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC)	2,305.15	1,194.85
Auction instalments/pre-payment receipts	30,755.39	6,242.35
Other Spectrum related receipts	388.98	211.02
Receipts from BSNL on account of cost of administratively allotted Spectrum	10,697.17	52,372.73
Grand Total	44,146.69 (A)	60,020.95 (B)

Note : Total of (A) + (B) above = Rs.1,04,167.64 Cr.

The Committee observe that even though there is no shortfall in achieving the targets during FY 2024-25 while including the anticipated receipts from January to March, 2025, the actual target can be ascertained only after 31.03.2025.

The Department have further informed that the actual expenditure under Capital section is Rs. 7445.26 Crores as on 31/12/2024 against allocation of Rs. 82,646.52 Crores in RE 2024-25. The RE 2024-25 has been allocated in the month of January 2025 only and all round efforts are being made for full utilisation of allocated fund. In this regard, it is also

submitted that an amount of Rs. 61,799.62 crores pertaining to Capital infusion of BSNL(for spectrum allocation) will be utilized in the month of March, 2025.

**18.** Regarding the measures taken by the Department to increase revenue earnings and the factors affecting revenue receipts and measures required to increase revenue, the Department in its written reply stated the following measures for increasing revenue related to License Fee:

- a) Telecom Reforms, 2021 has clarified the definition of Adjusted Gross revenue (AGR) to include various sources of income from telecom operations.
- b) Facility to make online paperless payments & Online Grievance resolution process.
- c) 28 CCAs have been hand-holding licensees for on-boarding on SARAS portal and making submissions / payments via the Telecom Facilitation Center (TFC) and Telecom Outreach Programmes (TOP). This led to increased participation, grievance redressal and revenue assurance. Over 500 licensees have directly benefitted from these initiatives.

License Fee payments are made by TSPs through SARAS portal of DoT, which is integrated with Bharatkosh.

**19.** The Department further stated the measures taken to increase spectrum revenue earnings as follows:

- a) Access Spectrum is assigned through auctions only.
- b) Provision for mandatory upfront payments is removed and number of equated annual installments were increased from 16 to 20. This facilitates TSPs to bid for more spectrum in Auction. Further, requirement for submission of Financial Bank Guarantees securitizing the annual spectrum installment dues were removed to decrease the overall cost of holding spectrum.
- c) Provision for pre-payment of Spectrum Auction is extended to any time in the year instead of only installment anniversary date as earlier.

1. **License Fees:** These revenue receipts are maintained digitally in the Bharatkosh/PFMS platforms of Govt.

**Spectrum:** Revenue receipts are maintained according to the Head of Accounts allotted for the Dept. of Telecom.

2. The factors affecting LF revenue receipts are revenue of telecom operators, regulatory policies, technological advancements viz. 5G, 6G, market competition, subscriber growth and demand, pricing strategies, infrastructure investments etc.

Factors affecting spectrum revenue receipts:

- a. TSPs under Corporate Insolvency Resolution Professional (CIRP) adversely affected the revenue receipts.

b. Further, pursuant to support package in Sept. 2021, M/s Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL), M/s. Bharti Airtel Ltd. (BAL) and M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. were given the option of moratorium for 4 years for Spectrum auction dues and converting interest amount pertaining to deferred installments into equity.

c. M/s Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL), M/s. Bharti Hexacom Ltd. M/s. Bharti Airtel Ltd., M/s. Quardrant Televentures Ltd., M/s. Tata Teleservices Ltd. (TTSL) and M/s. Tata tele services (Maharashtra) Ltd. (TTML) were given the option of moratorium for 4 years for AGR dues (LF&SUC) upto 2018-19 and converting interest amount pertaining to deferred installments into equity.

d. As part of Telecom Reforms, Spectrum Usage Charges has been reduced to Zero for the spectrum acquired through spectrum auction held in 2022 and subsequent years. Further reforms introduced in September 2021, are expected to decrease the cost of operations for TSPs, facilitate foreign investment and at the same time increase the ease of doing business for TSPs.

e. These reforms are also expected to increase revenue for TSPs thus also increasing the AGR based revenue receipts to Gol.

Further, in the Para 2.8 of the CAG Report No. 20 of 2015 pertaining to Communications and IT Sector, the following observations were made: “ 2.8 Lack of due diligence in auction of spectrum for Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) Services The NIA for BWA Auction suffered from deficiencies in scope of usage of spectrum for different class of Licencees. The UAS/CMTS and ISP operators were allowed to bid for the same BWA spectrum while the usage of spectrum was governed by their respective licences. This led to post-auction demand by M/s Infotel for network codes which would have enabled them to provide voice services beyond the scope of their ISP licence. DoT facilitated the request by permitting them to migrate to Unified Licence after the auction. This migration, allowed at prices discovered in 2001, resulted in undue advantage of ` Rs.3,367.29 crore to M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm (formerly M/s Infotel). It was also seen that even after four years of auction the roll out of BWA services has been negligible.”

**20.**           Elaborating upon the steps taken by the Department to achieve the targets during 2025-26, the Department replied in their written submissions as follows;

“Following are the measures taken by the Department to achieve targets related to License Fee for FY 2025-26:

- a) Facility to make online paperless payments
- b) Fully Digital and Paperless submission of financial documents
- c) Online Grievance resolution process
- d) 28 CCAs have been hand-holding licensees for on-boarding on SARAS portal and making submissions / payments via the Telecom Facilitation Center (TFC) and Telecom Outreach Programs (TOP). This led to increased participation, grievance redressal and revenue assurance. Over 500 licensees have directly benefitted from these initiatives.

- e) In FY 2023-24, 351 licensees made the payment and 502 licensees submitted the documents after availing Telecom Outreach facilities. Also, Rs. 18.82 Cr. of dues recovery was made through TOP/TFC.

Receipt of Spectrum deferred installments & SUC shall be continuously monitored.

- a) Further, it is certified that all court cases ( 41 Nos.) of WPF Wing have been entered in the LIMBS fields and updated in all respect as on 01.01.2025.”

#### **IV. Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) renamed as Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)**

21. USOF, formed by an Act of Parliament, was established w.e.f. 01.04.2002 under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 (further amended in 2006), to provide financial support for the provision of telecom services in commercially unviable rural and remote areas of the Country. It is an attached office of the DoT, and is headed by the Administrator, USOF, appointed by the Central Government. Further w.e.f 26 June, 2024 it has been renamed as ‘Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)’.

22. In accordance with the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, License fee includes Universal Access Levy, which is charged @ 5% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of the telecom licensees. The fund collected under UAL goes to the Consolidated Fund of India and it is non-lapsable in nature. The outflow from this fund to USOF is through budgetary provision by the Ministry of Finance each year, based on the requirement of USOF. Since inception of DBN (e-USOF) in FY 2002-03, UAL amounting to Rs. 1,71,590.68 crore has been collected up to 31.12.2024. The balance of UAL amount available as on 31.12.2024 is Rs. 86,359.77 crore. Government has approved committed expenditure of Rs. 1.39 Lakh Cr. for Amended BharatNet Scheme for next 10 years on 04.08.2023 along with other committed liabilities for other ongoing schemes.

22. Amount proposed, allocated at BE, RE and actual utilization during 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 proposed and BE during 2025-26 for various schemes of USOF are as under:

(Rs. in crore)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
Proposed	13,250	9,000	11,000	25,500	28,400
BE	9,000	9,000	10,400	19,000	28,400
RE	8,300	3,010	15,700	13,700	
Actual	8,300	3,500	8,380.50	5826.93*	
% w.r.t. RE	100%	116.28%	53.38%	42.53%	

\*Fund disbursed upto 31.12.2024.

**23.** Regarding the schemes where there had been major shortfalls in achieving the targets during 2024-25 and the reasons for their poor performance, if any, the Department has stated as follows:

“BE for 2024-25 of Rs. 19,000 crores (Rs. 8,500 crore for BharatNet, Rs. 10,500 crore for other DBN's schemes) was received. The same was proposed during RE 2024-25 against which RE of Rs. 13,700 crore (Rs. 6,500 for BharatNet and Rs. 7,200 crore for other DBN's Schemes) was allotted. RE for the FY 2024-25 is sufficient to meet the expenditure for DBN's Schemes.

**The performance of the schemes during FY 2024-25 are as under:**

- i. Amended BharatNet Program BharatNet:** BSNL has put notice inviting tender (NIT) for selection of Project Implementing Agency (PIA) for Development (creation, upgradation, operation & maintenance) of middle mile network of BharatNet on Design Build Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model for sixteen packages on 15.02.2024 and opened on 07.08.2024 which is under finalization. Financial bids for all 16 packages are opened. For 6 packages (UP East, U P West, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal (including A&N) and Punjab) out of 16, advance work order has been issued.
- ii. Mobile Projects:** The delay in installation and supply of indigenously developed and domestically manufactured equipment is the main cause for the short fall in Schemes namely 4G Saturation scheme and LTE Phase-I upgradation, BoP/BIP etc.

The Department have further stated that a pilot project funded from Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) for rolling out of 5 lakh FTTH connections in GPs/villages using BharatNet through BharatNetUdyamies (BNUs) has been given to BSNL. As on 26.08.2024, a total 8,01,250 FTTH connections has been provisioned through about 6,212 BharatNetUdyamies (BNUs). In 8 States (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Tamil Nadu,), State-led SPVs, who are implementing BharatNet Phase-II in the state, are responsible for utilization.

As per the Amended BharatNet program approved by the Union Cabinet on 04.08.2023, it is proposed to provide 1.5 crore rural home fibre connections distributed across all States/UTs with priority to cover Government institutions including schools, Primary Health Centres, Anganwadis, Panchayat offices etc., using the BNU model over the next five years

**24.** The Department has further stated in their written submissions that:

“The details of fund allocation for various DBN Schemes is as under:

Sl. No.	Schemes	2024-25 Proposed	2024-25 BE	2024-25 RE	2024-25 Actual Upto 31.12.2024)	2025-26 Proposed	2025-26 BE
1.	BharatNet	15,000	8,500	6,500	2,205.54	22,000	22,000
2.	Other USOF Scheme	10,500	10,500	7,200	3,621.39	6,400	6,400
	Total	25,500	19,000	13,700	5,826.93	28,400	28,400

#### **A. Progress of implementation of BharatNet**

**25.** BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats in the Country. Under the project, network infrastructure is being created as a national asset for Broadband Highways, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis, to provide affordable broadband services to citizens and institutions in rural areas, in partnership with States and the private sector. The remaining work of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II is expected to be completed in current financial year 2024-25. The Union Cabinet has approved the Amended BharatNet Program on 04.08.2023 with cost of INR 1,39,579 crores to be funded from USOF, including CAPEX cost of Rs. 42,847 crores and OPEX cost for ten years for Rs 48.717 crores. This includes First-mile management by BSNL to provide Internet Leased Line (ILL) Bandwidth across all 7,269 Blocks and to provide minimum 25 Mbps download speed to each FTTH subscriber.

**26.** While submitting information about other DBN projects, the Department stated:

**“The Plans to achieve the targets of DBN Schemes are as under:**

Union Cabinet has appointed BSNL as Project Management Agency (PMA) for Amended BharatNet Project. BSNL has put notice inviting tender (NIT) for selection of Project Implementing Agency (PIA) for Development (creation, upgradation, operation & maintenance) of middle mile network of BharatNet on Design Build Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model for sixteen packages on 15.02.2024 and opened on 07.08.2024 which is under finalization. Financial bids for all 16 packages are opened. For 6 packages (UP East, U P West, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal (including A&N) and Punjab) out of 16, advance work order has been issued. The Department further stated that, “RFP was floated by BSNL for selection of Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) for 16 packages (excluding Eight State led Model states) on 15.02.2024 and opened on 07.08.2024. Advance Orders have been issued in 6 packages & further Master Service

Agreement has been signed between BSNL & respective PIAs for three packages and evaluation of remaining packages are ongoing.

RFP for selection of Independent Engineer (04 packages) for overseeing work of PIAs in 16 packages was opened on 15.10.2024 and RFP for Independent Engineer (02 packages) for overseeing work of PIAs in Eight packages (under State led model) was opened on 18.10.2024. Technical bids are under evaluation

RFP for selection of PIA for C-NoC floated on 01.01.2025 and the last date of submission of RFP is 28.02.2025.

Hence, ABP is implemented by BSNL via open competitive bidding process through which PIA will be selected. Hence any eligible company can be given work under BharaNet Selected through Open competitive process.”

**(ii) Other USOF's Projects:-** In order to achieve the targets of other USOF Projects, the issues in the projects have been taken the multi –cornered approach at various level for their resolution with the concerned State/UT Govts. DoT/USOF is constantly monitoring the projects, resolving roadblocks, if any, assisting in getting clearances for project.

BE for the FY 2025-26 has been sought to ensure sufficient fund is available for the projects.”(lop Qn No -24)

27. The details with respect to Proposed, BE, RE and actual during 2021-22 to 2024-25, Proposed and BE during 2025-26 are as under:

(Rs. in Crore)

Year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Proposed	10,000	7,000	5,000	15,000	22,000.00
BE	7,000	7,000	5,000	8,500	22,000.00
RE	7,000 (Re-appropriated as 7,510.96)	1,500	5000	6,500	
Actuals	7,510.96	1,500	3,075.54	*2205.54	
%w.r.t. RE	100%	100%	61.51%	34%	

\*Expenditure upto 31.12.2024.

### **Implementation and Status of the BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II**

BharatNet is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages in the country. The Union Cabinet on 25.10.2011 approved the project for creation of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN), now known as BharatNet, to provide Broadband connectivity for connecting Block Headquarters (BHQs) to Gram Panchayats (GPs), i.e. middle-mile network. Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) was incorporated on February 25, 2012 as a Special Purpose Vehicle for its establishment, management and operations. In order to create synergy in terms of cost reduction and revenue enhancement the merger of BBNL with BSNL was approved by Union Cabinet on 27.07.2022 as a part of “Revival of BSNL and merger of BBNL with BSNL” vide its

Cabinet Note dated 25.07.2022 decided to achieve the larger objective of better utilization of existing assets.

**28.** When the Committee desired to know about the Implementation of BharatNet Project, the Department in their written replies stated as under-

“The Phase-I of the project has been implemented through GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Network) technology by using existing fibre of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) - Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), RailTel Corporation Limited (RailTel) and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) and laying underground incremental fibre to bridge the connectivity gap up to the GPs. The Phase-I was completed in December 2017 with the implementation of over 1 lakh GPs. Subsequently, the scope of Phase-I has been enhanced to the revised work-front of about 1.20 lakh. As on 20.01.2025 by laying 3,12,449 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), total 1,20,179 GPs have been made Service Ready under Phase-I (Revised work front).

For expediting the implementation of BharatNet, a modified strategy was approved by Cabinet on 19.07.2017 at an estimated cost of Rs. 42,068 crore, which provides an optimal mix of media (OFC/Radio/satellite) to connect Gram Panchayats (GPs), multiple implementation models - State-led Model, Private Sector through BBNL and CPSU Model through BSNL/PGCIL, provision of Last Mile connectivity (e.g. through Wi-Fi) in GPs, etc. As on 20.01.2025 under BharatNet Phase II, by laying 3,80,250 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), 89,112 GPs have been made Service Ready. Further, 5,032 GPs have been made Service Ready on Satellite media. In total, 94,144 GPs have been made Service Ready under the BharatNet under Phase-II in the country.

Regarding the overall progress of BharatNet (Phase-I + Phase-II), 2,09,291 GPs have been made Service Ready on OFC media by laying 6,92,699 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) as on 20.01.2025.

The Department further stated that BharatNet connectivity in remaining 47,000 GPs (including satellite GPs) has been planned under Amended BharatNet Program for which RFP is under progress in BSNL

**29.** On being asked about the reasons for variation from BE to RE during 2024-25 and any shortfall in achieving the targets during 2024-25, the Department has submitted its reply as follows:

“Under BE for FY 2024-25, Rs. 8,500 crore was allotted and same was decreased in RE 2024-25 to Rs. 6,500 crore. Rs. 3,134 crore has been disbursed under BharatNet up to 31.01.2025 ”.

## **B. Utilization of BharatNet Networks**

**30.** The utilization of network is through leasing of bandwidth and dark fibre, Wi-Fi to access broadband/internet services at public places, and Fibre to the Home (FTTH) to provide broadband connectivity to Government Institutions (like school, Health Centre, Anganwadi, Police Station, Krishi Vikash Kendra, Post Office, Ration Shop, etc.), Private Institutions and Households, and FTTH connections to rural households through the USOF-funded BharatNet Udyami scheme, Service Partners and State Implementing Agencies. The

work of provisioning of Wi-Fi hotspots in about 5200 GPs of BharatNet Phase-II (being connected on satellite media) is under process.

- So far, the utilization is as follows (as on 20.01.2025):

Sl. No.	Utilization Model	Actual Utilization
1	FTTH connections*	12,24,368
2	Wi-Fi installed (GPs)	1,04,574
3	Dark Fibre leased	1,03,634 Km
4	Data consumption (Dec, 2024)	1,41,558 TB

\* include FTTH connections provisioned under the pilot

**31.** On being asked about the main issues confronting the implementation of Bharat Net Project , the Department replied as under:-

“The Gram Panchayats (GPs) are widely dispersed across the country in rural and remote areas. The implementation in 96% GPs planned under BharatNet Phase-I/II has been completed. The balance work of BharatNet Phase-I/II largely pending in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu under State Led Model and UP (East/West) under CPSU Model is likely to be completed shortly. The project is facing challenges on account of covering difficult terrains (including Hilly/ Rocky), Right of Way (RoW) issues and also difficulty in accessing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas. Further, BharatNet connectivity in remaining 42,000 GPs has been planned under Amended BharatNet Program for which RFP is under progress in BSNL. **Further, BharatNet connectivity in remaining 47,000 GPs (including satellite GPs) has been planned under Amended BharatNet Program for which RFP is under progress in BSNL”.**

**32.** Regarding the measures taken to address these issues, the Department submitted the following:

“

The measures are as follows:

- Appointment of Project Implementing Agency (PIA) for Development (creation, upgradation, operation & maintenance) of middle mile network of BharatNet on Design Build Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model.
- It is proposed to provide 1.5 crore rural home fibre connections distributed across all States/UTs with priority to cover Government institutions including schools, Primary Health Centers, Anganwadis, Panchayat offices etc., using the BNU model over the next five years to promote/ ensure utilisation of network.
- Monitoring of the project at various levels by DBN, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited/ Bharat Broadband Network Limited with implementing Agencies for speedy roll out of the project.
- Resolving all pending issues in expeditious manner.”

**33.** On being asked about the targets and achievements with respect to expansion of telecom infrastructure ,the Department has replied as under:

“Rs. 42,301.08 crore has been disbursed under BharatNet as on 31.12.2024. The status of implementation/ achievement of BharatNet as on 27.01.2025 is as under:

- i. Total length of OFC laid: 6,92,749 Kms
- ii. No. of GPs service ready [excluding BHQs & incl Satellite] : 2,14,323
- iii. No. of GPs provided with Wi-Fi hotspots: 1,04,574
- iv. No. of FTTH connections: 12,24,368
- v. Leasing of Fibre: 1,03,637 Kms
- vi. Leasing of BharatNet Bandwidth: 2,66,131 Mbps
- vii. Data Consumption ( December, 2024): 1,41,558 TB ”.

For expansion of telecom infrastructure in the country, the details on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set by DoT during year 2025-26 is as below:

S.No.	Action Points	Targets for FY2025-26	Steps being taken
<b>COVERAGE</b>			
1.	BharatNet: GPs with Functional OFC	1.5lakhGPs	Amended BharatNet programme has been launched to achieve the target
2.	5G Rollout: Percentage penetration of infrastructure	85%	Likely to be achieved in FY 2025-26.
3.	a. Number of FTTH connections per 100 population (comparable with ITU statistics-India is at 2.69 per 100)	3.5per100	Amended BharatNet program has been launched to achieve the target
	b. Number of FTTH provided on BharatNet in rural areas(cumulative)—as of 31.03.2024,9.66 lakh connection have been provided	18lakhs	Amended BharatNet program has been launched to achieve the target.
4.	Mobile Connectivity: Number of uncovered villages to be covered by mobile services by any USOF scheme or TSPs(outofthetotaluncoveredvillagesason31st March2024)	23968	The project for saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the country was approved on 27.07.2022 at a total cost of Rs.26.316/-. The project will provide 4G mobile services in the uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas and is being

			executed by BSNL.
<b>QUALITY OF SERVICE</b>			
5.	Network Latency (Wireless)–  [As on now Targeted benchmark by TRAI is ms]	75 ms	Achieved
6.	Broadband Download speed (Mbps) - Ookla Speed test Index Fiber (India is ranked 92 with 61.8 Mbps)	70 Mbps	For faster and easier deployment of telecommunication infrastructure in the country, the Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules 2024 have been notified under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Amended BharatNet program has been launched to achieve the target.
<b>CONSUMPTION</b>			
7.	Average Wireless Data Usage per subscriber per month	21.10 GB per Subscriber per Month	With proliferation of newer technologies and use cases such as 5G etc. average wireless data usage per subscriber per month will further increase.

### **Revised implementation strategy of BharatNet to connect 6 lakh villages**

**34.** When asked about the details of total number of uncovered villages which have no telecom connectivity and plans envisaged to provide connectivity to these villages, the Department replied that:

“As per data received from Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), Department of Telecom’s field unit and State Governments as of November, 2024, out of 6,44,131 villages (villages are as per data of Registrar General of India as of November 2019) in the country, around 6,24,249 villages are having mobile connectivity and 19,882 villages are not having any mobile coverage.

Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) provide telecommunication connectivity in the country in a phased manner. Government through funding from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is implementing various schemes for providing mobile network coverage in all uncovered villages of the country. Details of schemes/projects to improve the telecommunication connectivity in rural, tribal and LWE affected areas across the country:

- Saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the country. The estimated project cost is Rs. 26,316 Cr.
- Provision of 4G mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas Phase-II. The estimated project cost is Rs. 2,211 Cr.
- Provision of 4G Mobile Services in North Eastern Region of the country under Comprehensive Telecom Development Programme for NER. The estimated cost for schemes is Rs. 3,637 Cr.
- Provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 7,287 Aspirational District villages (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha). And provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in four States (namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan). The estimated cost for projects is Rs. 7,152 Cr.
- Provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 354 uncovered villages of J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Border area & other priority areas. The estimated project cost is Rs. 337 Cr.

Provision of 4G Mobile Coverage in 85 uncovered Villages and seamless 4G Mobile coverage of NH223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The estimated project cost is Rs. 130 Cr”.

### **C. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region**

35. According to the Department, the details of schemes under CTDP for NE Region are as follows:

**“Mobile Services in Uncovered villages in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of NER and seamless coverage along National Highway:** As per initial scope, mobile connectivity was to be provided by setting up 2004 towers in the uncovered villages and along National Highways of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of North-East region. The Agreements were signed with Bharti Airtel Ltd. and Bharti Hexacom Ltd. on 08.12.2017 for implementation of the project at a total project cost of Rs. 1655.56 Crore. As on 10.09.2024, a total of 1,358 sites have been installed and are providing services. The project has completed roll-out and under operation and maintenance stage.. “

The State-wise details are as follows:

**Table: State wise Progress of the scheme**

S. No.	State	No. of Towers (as per Agreement)	Towers installed and providing services	Coverage provided by towers	
				Villages covered	NH covered
1	Assam	983	439	530	25
2	Sikkim	20	8	9	0
3	Manipur	437	404	382	55
4	Mizoram	246	214	213	17
5	Nagaland	160	152	112	45
6	Tripura	9	3	-	3
7	Arunachal Pradesh	149	138	-	138
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>1246</b>	<b>283</b>

Total subscribers: 8.37 lakh

Around 372 sites have been dropped by operator due to pre-existence of mobile coverage, population migrated to other village, etc. and remaining sites were not installed due to various reasons, forest and defence clearance, accessibility issues, land record issues, villages washed out, villages not found, State mismatch, etc.

**36.** Regarding the Mobile Services in Uncovered villages of Meghalaya and seamless coverage along National Highway, the Department informed the Committee as under:

The work has been awarded to M/s Bharti Hexacom Ltd for 1,164 uncovered villages and 11 sites along National Highways in Meghalaya on 04.09.2020 for provisioning of 4G mobile services at a total project cost of Rs. 804.37 Crore. However, 323 sites covering 406 villages & 2 NH sites have been dropped due to pre-existence of mobile coverage. Further, additional 528 sites covering 723 villages have been added on the request of State Government. After physical survey of all the villages and NH locations including additional villages the revised scope is 442 sites covering 637 villages & 3 NH locations. The revised cost of the project is Rs. 971.96 Cr. The details as per agreement are as follows:

Number of Villages as per agreement	Number of BTS as per agreement	Deletion of sites approved	Addition Approved village (sites)	Executable Scope -village /NH locations (sites)	Towers commissioned	Villages/ NH locations Covered
1164	889	323	723 (528 sites)	637 (442 sites)	433	625

**Note:** Survey of all sites (except 03 villages from additional scope) has been completed. Roll out period is Sep 2022 which has been further extended upto March 2025 for remaining sites of original scope. Further, 18 months rollout has been provided for 528 additional sites i.e. upto 24.05.2024 which was extended upto 24.11.2024 and further extension is under consideration for remaining sites of additional scope.

**37.** Furnishing details about Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Arunachal Pradesh and 2 Districts of Assam the Department has stated:

“Agreements have been signed with M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited for provision of services in Arunachal Pradesh on 29.10.2021 and with M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited for 2 Districts of Assam on 01.11.2021. The total project cost is Rs. 1255.49 Crore. Rollout period is April 2023 which has been extended upto March 2025. The present Status of Project is as under:

Number of Villages as per agreement		Number of BTS as per agreement	Executable scope of villages after survey	Executable scope of Towers after survey	Towers Commissioned	Villages Covered
Arunachal Pradesh	1683	980	1025	535	449	875
Karbi Anglong & Dima Hasao Districts of Assam	691	531	322	239	222	303

The Department has further added that:

“For making available high quality and high-speed internet access to the States of North Eastern Region of the country, financial support of Rs. 17.15 crore is to be provided to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for hiring of 20 Gbps International Bandwidth for

Internet Connectivity to Agartala from Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL), Bangladesh via Cox Bazar. The first 10 Gbps link was commissioned on 26.11.2021 and the second 10 Gbps link was commissioned on 21.04.2022”.

## **Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands**

**38.** When the Committee desired to know about the progress made under the plan, the Department informed regarding the Provision of 4G Mobile Coverage in Uncovered Villages and seamless 4G Mobile coverage of National Highway in Andaman & Nicobar Islands as follows:-

“An Agreement was signed between USOF and M/s RJIL on 15.03.2021 for setting up of 82 towers to provide mobile services on 4G Technology in identified 85 uncovered villages (with population of 10 or more), and 42 towers for providing 4G mobile services to bridge the gaps in mobile connectivity along uncovered NH-4 (earlier NH-223). The total project cost is Rs. 129.58 Crore and is targeted to be completed by September 2024. The revised cost of the Project is Rs. 110 crore as on date. The target for completion of project was extended from 14.03.2021 due to Covid related logistics issues, pending Forest permissions and non availability of land and backhaul. 66 sites have been commissioned in this project. 46 of these sites are along National Highway-4. 20 sites have been set up to provide 4G services in 20 villages.”

**39.** While submitting details about Submarine OFC Connectivity between Mainland India (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands the Department has stated that:

“The project entails Provision of Submarine Optical Fibre Cable Connectivity between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (KLI Project) comprising of Kavarati and ten other Islands, namely, Kalpeni, Agatti, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmat. The total estimated route length is about 1,772 km and the total Financial Implication is about Rs. 1,072 Crore (excluding taxes). The project is targeted to be implemented within 1000 days from the date of announcement by Hon’ble Prime Minister on 15th August 2020. It was dedicated to the nation by Hon’ble Prime Minister on 03.01.2024”.

**40.** About the Provision of 4G Mobile Services, augmentation of OFC Transmission Network & Provision of FTTH services in Lakshadweep Islands, the Department stated as follows:

“DoT is supporting a scheme for augmentation of Telecom infrastructure in Lakshadweep islands at a total cost of Rs. 62.86 Cr.

The works include:

- i. Upgradation of 17 existing 2G tower sites to 4G mobile services. 13 existing 2G towers upgraded to 4G.

- ii. Installation of additional 20 new mobile tower sites (including Suheli Island) for provision of 4G mobile services. 13 new sites have been commissioned.
- iii. Creation of 225Km OFC network for provision of FTTH in Lakshadweep Islands. This includes the operation and maintenance cost for 5 years with provision of services at the same QoS/ SLA for 10 year. Work is complete. 7300 FTTH connections have been provided.

This project has been planned to reap the benefits of huge bandwidth created under KLI Project of submarine optical fibre connectivity between Kochi and Kavaratti and ten other Islands of Lakshadweep Islands.”

#### **D. BharatNet Udhyaami Scheme**

**41.** According to the Department, the Union Cabinet accorded its approval on 04.08.2023 regarding Amended BharatNet Program to provide high speed broadband connectivity to all inhabited villages in the Country. The Project is fully funded through Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) at an estimated cost of INR 1,39,579 crore. The amount is Rs 1.88 lakh crores including the outlay for Phase-I and Phase-II. BSNL has been appointed as Project Management Agency (PMA) for Amended BharatNet Project. BSNL has put notice inviting tender (NIT) for selection of Project Implementing Agency (PIA) for Development (creation, upgradation, operation & maintenance) of middle mile network of BharatNet on Design Build Operate and Maintain (DBOM) model for sixteen packages on 15.02.2024 and opened on 07.08.2024 which is under finalization. **Financial bids for all 16 packages are opened. For 6 packages (UP East, U P West, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal (including A&N) and Punjab) out of 16, advance work order has been issued.**

**42.** Under the current scope of the BharatNet, the Gram Panchayats (GPs) are primarily connected in linear structure because of which the reliability of the network is low. However, under the Amended BharatNet Program an estimated 2.65 lakh GPs are proposed to be connected in ring network. The remaining 3.8 lakh villages are proposed to be connected on demand basis.

The network shall be maintained by professional agencies specialized in optical fiber networks, selected through bidding process by BSNL. These agencies will maintain network for a period of 10 years to high defined standards of availability. It is also proposed to engage a professional private sector partner for the Network Operations Centres (NOC) to design, build, operate and maintain the NOC for 10 years. BSNL has put Request for Proposal (RFP) for Designing, Planning, Supply, Installation, Configuration, Customisation, Intergation, Testing, Commissioning and O&M of C-NOC for Amended BharatNet Program on 01.01.2025.

**43.** The last mile network is to be managed through BharatNet Udyamis (BNU) who could be a village level entrepreneur, Internet Service Provider, Self Help Group etc. BNUs would be given a one-time financial incentive for activating new home fiber connections. To incentivize continuity of services, BNUs would also receive a share of the monthly revenue (on established market practice). It was proposed to eventually provide 1.50 crore rural home fiber connections using the BNU model over the next five years. In order to fast track last mile connectivity, about

100 districts were identified for prioritizing expenditure on upgradation of infrastructure and subsidy to home fibre connections. BSNL would provide Internet Leased Line (ILL) to all 7,269 blocks with sufficient bandwidth to ensure minimum 25 Mbps download speed to every home fibre subscriber.

**44.** The estimated cost and disbursement of funds under BharatNet Project upto 31.12.2024 as submitted by the Department are as under:

All Figures in Rs. Crore				
S.No.	Activity as approved by Union Cabinet	Amount as approved by Union Cabinet	Estimated cabinet approved cost (with taxes)	Funds disbursed from USOF (as on 31.12.2024)
1	BharatNet Phase I (CAPEX)	11148	12708.72	10285.97
2	BharatNet Phase II (CAPEX)	18792	22174.56	20430.47
3	Operational and Maintenance	6046	7134.28	6738.11
4	Last Mile Connectivity	4066	4066	1466.3
5	Replacement of Lossy fiber	2016	2378.88	850
6	<b>Total</b>	<b>42068</b>	<b>48462.44</b>	<b>39770.85</b>
7	Amended BharatNet Program	120756	139579	2530.59*
8	<b>Total (6 to 7)</b>	<b>162824</b>	<b>188041.44</b>	<b>42,301.44</b>

\*For O&M of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II by BSNL. **There will be mobilization advance requires to be disbursed to PMA and PIA for the implementation of ABP.**

**45.** While furnishing information with respect to BharatNet Saturation Project-across rural and remote India, the following information was submitted by the Department:

“The Union Cabinet on 27.07.2022 approved an USOF funded project for saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the country at a total cost of Rs. 26,316 Cr. The project will provide 4G mobile services in 24,680 uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas. The project has a provision to include additional villages on account of rehabilitation, new-settlements, withdrawal of services by existing operators etc. In addition, 6,279 villages having only 2G/3G connectivity shall be upgraded to 4G. The revised Project Cost is Rs. 30620.49 crore.

Agreement has been signed with BSNL on 06.02.2023. As per Cabinet note, target date for completion of the project was 500 days from the date of signing of agreement. Further, rollout period has been extended upto June, 2025.

As on December, 2024, 17,360 Towers including 659 towers upgradation have been planned, out of which 7,815 towers have been commissioned covering 10, 706 villages.”

#### **E. Aspirational Districts Scheme**

**46.** According to the Department, the details of progress made under the scheme is as follows:-

**“502 Aspirational District villages (MP, UP, Rajasthan, Bihar):-**A Scheme for 502 uncovered villages across 112 Aspirational Districts over four States (namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) for provisioning of 4G based Mobile services has been finalized. Agreements has been signed and work has been awarded to M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd for UP and MP States, M/s Bharti Hexacom Ltd for Rajasthan and M/s Bharti Airtel Ltd for Bihar after tendering process in March, 2021. The total project cost is Rs. 414 Crore as per the agreement. The Roll out period of the project was March 2022 which has been extended upto June,2025.

In addition to above, 27 villages of Madhya Pradesh have been added in the scheme against deleted village vide letter dated 22.08.2022 having Roll out period was 21.08.2023 which has been extended upto 21.02.2025. “

The State- wise list of 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational districts of 4 States as submitted by the Department are as follows:

S. No.	State Name	No. of villages to be covered	No. of towers to be installed	Executable scope of villages after survey	Executable scope of Towers after survey	No. of Sites Commissioned	No. of Villages Covered
1	Bihar	80	62	51	30	27	46
2	Madhya Pradesh	232	194	151	140	126	136
3	Rajasthan	195	186	70	61	43	50
4	Uttar Pradesh	22	20	19	19	19	19
	<b>Total</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>251</b>

**47.** As regards the remaining 7,287 Aspirational District villages (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha) the Department in its written submission has stated as follows:-

“Project entails provisioning of 4G based Mobile services in 7,287 uncovered villages of 44 Aspirational Districts of 5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha. An agreement with M/s RJIL for 3 States and M/s BAL for 2 States have been signed on 20.05.2022 at a cost of Rs. 3765.47 crore and survey work is in progress. Target for completion of this project was November, 2023 which has been extended upto May, 2025. State-wise details are as follows:

Sl. No.	State	No. of Villages as per agreement	No. of sites as per agreement	Executable scope of villages after survey	Executable scope of Towers after survey	No. of Sites Commissioned	No. of Villages Covered
1	Andhra Pradesh	1218	771	1030	603	487	870
2	Chhattisgarh	699	546	287	250	192	222
3	Odisha	3933	2379	3159	2150	1256	1973
4	Jharkhand	827	625	480	322	259	370
5	Maharashtra	610	458	425	350	303	369
<b>Total</b>		<b>7287</b>	<b>4779</b>	<b>5381</b>	<b>3675</b>	<b>2497</b>	<b>3804</b>

**Note:** Survey is pending at 540 villages due to security and villages not traceable. After survey, no. of sites may be increased.

**48.** Regarding the Scheme for Mobile Communications Services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas, the Department submitted the following:

**LWE Phase-I:** On 20.08.2014, the Cabinet approved the implementation of a project in LWE areas to provide Mobile Services on 2G technology in the 10 affected States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The work was awarded to M/s BSNL on nomination basis and Agreement was signed on 30.09.2014. The cost of the project was Rs 4214.28 crore. Under this scheme, 2343 sites were installed, commissioned and providing services and the Project is completed.

**LWE Phase-I (O&M and upgradation from 2G to 4G):** Till December 2024, 297 mobile tower has been upgraded from 2G to 4G. State wise details are as under:

S. No.	State	Sites providing 2G services	Sites upgraded to 4G
1.	Andhra Pradesh	62	21
2.	Bihar	250	3
3.	Chhattisgarh	525	223
4.	Jharkhand	816	24
5.	Maharashtra	65	3
6.	Madhya Pradesh	22	3
7.	Odisha	256	14
8.	Telangana	173	0
9.	Uttar Pradesh	78	1
10.	West Bengal	96	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,343</b>	<b>297</b>

:  
49. The State-wise details of functional Towers under LWE Phase-I are as follows  
:

S. No.	Name of the State	LWE Phase-I	
		Total LWE Districts	Towers functional
1	Andhra Pradesh	8	62
2	Bihar	22	250
3	Chhattisgarh	16	525
4	Jharkhand	21	816
5	Madhya Pradesh	1	22
6	Maharashtra	4	65
7	Odisha	19	256

8	Telangana	8	173
9	Uttar Pradesh	3	78
10	West Bengal	4	96
	<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>2343</b>

**50.** As regards LWE Phase II, the Department in its written submission has stated as follows:-

“The project entails provision of 2,542 towers to provide 4G mobile services for implementation of the project, tender was floated and agreements have been signed with Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd and Bharti Airtel Ltd in Sept/Oct 2021 at a cost of Rs. 2211.11 Crore. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd is to implement the project in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha (1602 towers) and Bharti Airtel Ltd in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (940 towers). Target for completion of this project is March, 2023 which has been extended upto May 2025.”

The following is the submission by the Department on the status of Mobile Towers in LWE Phase II:

S No.	State	No. of Mobile Towers	Revised scope of locations after survey	Revised scope of Towers after survey	No. of tower commissioned	Total no. of locations covered
1	Andhra Pradesh	346	214	197	188	204
2	Bihar	16	7	7	1	1
3	Chhattisgarh	971	503	480	428	448
4	Jharkhand	450	85	82	64	67
5	Madhya Pradesh	23	26	26	24	24
6	Maharashtra	125	81	80	74	75
7	Odisha	483	421	401	320	336
8	Telangana	53	16	16	7	7
9	Uttar Pradesh	42	0	0	0	0
10	West Bengal	33	0	0	0	0

S No.	State	No. of Mobile Towers	Revised scope of locations after survey	Revised scope of Towers after survey	No. of tower commissioned	Total no. of locations covered
Total		2542	1353	1289	1106	1162

**Note:** Survey is pending at 153 locations due to security. After survey, no. of sites may be increased

### Overall Tele-Density in India

51. According to the Department, the overall tele-density in India, as well as the information on rural and urban tele-density, and wireline and wireless subscribers in the Country as on 30.11.2024 is as given in the table below :

S.No.	Name of item	As on 30.11.2024
1	Total telephone connections	1187.73 million
2	Rural Telephone connections	527.47 million
3	Urban Telephone connections	660.26 million
4	Overall Teledensity	84.36%
5	Wireline Teledensity	2.72%
6	Wireless Teledensity	81.65%
7	Rural Teledensity	58.23%
8	Urban Teledensity	131.53%
9	Public	7.35%
10	Private	77.01%

Further, Operator-wise share in total telephone connections as on 30.11.2024 is as follows:

Status of telephones, service provider-wise as on 30.11.2024							
Sr.No	Service provider	Wireline		Wireless		Total Telephones	
		Total Wireline Telephone s	%age share of Wirelin e phones	Total Wireless Telephone s	% age share of Wireles s	G.Total Telephones (Wireline+Wireles s)	%ag e shar e in total
	<b>PRIVATE</b>						
1	Bharti Airtel Limited	9684633	25.33	384273961	33.43	393958594	33.17

2	Reliance Communications Ltd.	117080	0.31	1782	0.00	<b>118862</b>	<i>0.01</i>
3	Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited	16299428	42.63	461231766	40.1246	<b>477531194</b>	<i>40.21</i>
4	VodafoneIdea	852107	2.23	208975106	18.1797	<b>209827213</b>	<i>17.67</i>
5	TATA Teleservices Ltd	2351304	6.15		0.00	<b>2351304</b>	<i>0.20</i>
6	Quadrant Televentures Ltd., Punjab	355915	0.93		0.00	<b>355915</b>	<i>0.03</i>
7	V-CON MOBILE INFRA & PVT LTD	63523	0.17		0.00	<b>63523</b>	<i>0.01</i>
	<b>Total Private (1 to 7)</b>	<b>29723990</b>	<b>77.75</b>	<b>1054482615</b>	91.73	<b>1084206605</b>	<b>91.28</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	<b>BSNL</b>	6088450	15.93	93113849	8.10	<b>99202299</b>	<i>8.35</i>
9	<b>MTNL</b>						
	<b>Total MTNL</b>	<b>1784490</b>	4.67	<b>1901918</b>	0.17	<b>3686408</b>	<i>0.31</i>
10	<b>APSFL</b>	634544	1.66		0.00	<b>634544</b>	<i>0.05</i>
	<b>Total PSUs (8 to 9)</b>	<b>8507484</b>	22.25	<b>95015767</b>	8.27	<b>103523251</b>	<i>8.72</i>
	<b>All India Total (1 to 9)</b>	<b>38231474</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1149498382</b>	100.00	<b>1187729856</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## V. Defence Spectrum: OFC based network for Defence Services

**52.** According to the Department, Network For Spectrum (NFS) is a Government-funded project, which is being implemented on a turn-key basis for Defence Tri-Services, in lieu of releasing the spectrum utilized by Defence Forces. BSNL is implementing the NFS Project on behalf of DoT. Under this project, a complete telecom network consisting of various network elements like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), transmission equipment, microwave, satellite, encryptors, end-point equipment, data centres etc. are being set up across the Country as a Tri-Services backbone. NFS projects provide high bandwidth through dedicated OFC and high-end communication and networking equipment including satellite and microwave as an alternative for redundancy, wherever applicable. (Lop Qn No 53)

**53.** The objective of this scheme is to enhance the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces through State-of-the-Art Telecom Network. It will enhance the communication capabilities of Defence services through a dedicated, secure and resilient. The availability of an integrated Tri-Service network including its online monitoring and management of traffic will strengthen the mission-critical capabilities in the current concept of modern warfare and also cater to the secure

communication requirement of Defence Forces in the future-ready cyberwar environment.

**54.** The proposed, BE, RE, Actuals from 2021-22 to 2024-25, proposed and BE for 2025-26 for this scheme, as submitted by the Department are as under:

**(Rs. In Cr.)**

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Proposed	6820	1961	2158.35	-	1553.94
BE	5200	1961	2158.35	-	1456.25
RE	5200	1961	3751.74	1315.96	-
Actual	3070	1000	1282.28	- (as on 31-12-24)	-
%ofexpenditure	59.04%	50.99%	34.17%	-	-

**55.** On being asked about the latest OFC based network for Defence overall status of implementation and achievements of all the components of the project vis-à-vis the targets in FY (24-25), the Department submitted the following details:

	Target(as% age of total)	Achievement(As %age of Total)
	2024-25	2024-25
OFC laid	100	98.7
OFC links commissioned	100	98.1
Equipment Ordered	100	100
Equipment Installed	100	97.4

The reasons for slow progress in project are given below:

- The project is of highly complex nature of 60,000 km OFC. Difficulties/delays were faced in receiving hundreds of Right of Way (RoW) permissions from various agencies like National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Railways, various agencies of State Governments (PWD, Forest, Wildlife, Municipal Bodies etc. Various road- widening activities have delayed the OFC laying and subsequent operationalization of Network.
- Limited working season in Ladakh/Kashmir/Arunachal Pradesh/Sikkim.
- Some Components to be manufactured/ installed by M/s BEL is still pending at their end.
- Army has placed additional requirement.

**56.** On being asked about the achievements of the OFC based network of Defence Services project, the Department submitted the following:-  
Achievement of the project:

INDIAN ARMY:

- Army network has been made operational in all the (six) commands in FY 2022-23.
- BoM for Southern Western Command has already been taken over at Army HQ on 01.11.2024.

INDIAN NAVY:

- IPMPLS Network has been commissioned in all Greenfield(33) & Brown field sites (93) in Feb 2022.
- Ku&C band components of satellite including 10 TST(Transportable Satellite Terminal) have also been commissioned.

**VI. Other contemporary issues and schemes**

**57.** Regarding PLI Scheme, the representative of the Department deposed before the Committee as under:-

“Sir, this is about the Production Linked Incentive scheme. We have one scheme which is currently in place. The forecast investment for this is Rs.4,014 crore. The details of this split between MSMEs and non-MSMEs are indicated here. For this current year, out of Rs.1,451 crore of RE, we are certain that we will be able to spend Rs.953 crore. Since this is demand-driven, the expenditure will be 67 per cent.”.

**58.** As regards the Digital Intelligence Unit(DIU) Project, the representatives of DoT while deposing before the Committee stated as:

“The hon. Chairperson has asked a question regarding the coordinated efforts on cybercrime with other departments. I will take you through this project of the DOT which answers that question also. When the menace of cybercrime started increasing, this project was conceived in 2023 with an outlay of Rs.22 crore for five years. Basically, there are two things that are required. One, for the citizens to report whatever problems they are facing. If they are getting any cyber fraud related calls and all. As per the allocation of business rules, cybercrime is dealt by the Ministry of Home Affairs. We deal with misuse of telecom resources as far as those cybercrimes are concerned. On one side, we started a Sanchar Saathi portal, which became very popular. There are more than 10.5 crore hits on that portal. A lot of complaints come to us. Based on those complaints, we analyse the data. We have put in place a Digital Intelligence Platform where more than 540 organizations are on boarded. These organizations include all the MHA bodies, law enforcement agencies, banking sector bodies, telecom service providers. The data is shared between

all the bodies through this Digital Intelligence Platform. Whatever complaints they get, whatever numbers are found to be involved in cybercrimes, they are all analysed and shared through this platform. Therefore, this is the basic platform on which the coordinated efforts are being done. Based on the coordinated efforts, the outcomes have been quite good. We have disconnected more than 2.8 crore mobile connections. WhatsApp accounts frozen have been more than 13 lakhs.”

## **VII. Review of functioning of PSUs**

**59.** There are 5 PSUs under DoT namely Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), ITI Limited (ITI), Telecommunications Consultants India limited (TCIL), and Bharat Broadband India Limited (BBNL). The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) is an autonomous body and is also the R&D arm of the Department. Review of performance of some PSUs are in the following paragraphs:

### **i. Performance of BSNL, MTNL& ITI**

**60.** The details of revenue and working expenditure of BSNL and MTNL as submitted by the Department are as under:

#### **Details of revenue & working expenses of BSNL**

**(Rs. In Cr)**

Year	2021-22	2022-23*	2023-24*	2024-25* (Projection)	2025-26* (Projection)
Total revenue from operations Target	25,411	17,161	19,052	24,428	-
Total revenue from operations actual/projections	16,809	19,131	19,344	24,428	26,871
Total Income actual/projections	19,052	20,702	21,317	26,528	<b>29,171</b>
Total expenditure actual/projections	26,034	27,364	26,683	28,753	<b>33,122</b>
Profit/(Loss) before exceptional items actual/projections	-6,982	-6,662	-5,366	-2,225	-3,951
Exceptional items	-	-1,499	-	-	
actual/projections					
Net Profit/(Loss) actual/projections	-6,982	-8,161	-5,366	-2,225	-3,951

#### **Notes:**

**1. The Total Income is not included by DPE in the Targets for the Company. The Target for Total Income (Rs 25,053 crore) was assigned in the FY 2021-22 only. However, the value of the Target for Total Income should not ideally be less than the Target for the Revenue for operations, which was Rs 25,411 crore for FY 2021-22.**

**2. \*FY 22-23 onwards MOU target is given basis consolidated financials, accordingly 22-23 onwards above data is given basis consolidated financials.**

**Revenue Target during 2024-25 of BSNL, achievement made and reasons for not meeting the target, if any.**

The target for Revenue from operations for 2024-25 is Rs 24,428 crores, against which revenue of Rs 9,235 crores has been achieved as on 30.09.2024. As per the provisional figures available the Revenue from Operations for 9 months upto Dec 24 is Rs 14,196 crores.

**Projected Revenue and expenditure of BSNL for the year 2025-26 and measures being taken to achieve the revenue targets:**

Projected Revenue and expenditure of BSNL for the year 2025-26 is tabulated below:

(In Rs Crore)	
Particulars	2025-26
Revenue from operations	26,871
Other Income	2,300
<b>Total Income (a)</b>	<b>29,171</b>
Employees Remuneration and Benefits	8,422
Depreciation (x)	8,055
License Fee and spectrum charges	2,305
Admin, operating and Other Expenses	12,646
Financial Expenses (y)	1,695
<b>Total Expenditure (b)</b>	<b>33,122</b>
<b>EBITDA z= (a-b+x+y)</b>	<b>5,798</b>
<b>Profit/ (Loss) (a-b)</b>	<b>-3,951</b>

With support from the Government towards Capex and Spectrum BSNL is in progress of launching Pan India 4G services. Already 74373 eNodeB has been installed & 63300 eNodeB are on aired as on 15.01.2024. The installation & commissioning of 1 Lakh eNodeB is expected to be completed by June-2025. Complete Launch of 4G services will enable the Company to increase customer base, ARPU and the revenues from Mobile Services.

The company has taken steps to expand the FTTH base utilizing the BharatNet network. It is focusing upon increasing the leased line customer base and monetization of towers and vacant land and buildings to increase the revenues.

BSNL is focused upon achieving better Quality of Service for customer satisfaction and retention.

**(viii) Impact of Revival plan on revenue receipt of BSNL.**

Upon implementation of revival package, it will impact revenue receipt significantly as per details provided in Annexure –A. Some major benefit are given below:

- (i) Capex Funding of Rs. 22,471 crore will support the augmentation of the network and roll out of 4G services among others.
- (ii) Spectrum in 900 MHz band has already been allotted with corresponding equity infusion which is essential for providing mobile services.
- (iii) Further the optical fibre network has been expanded following the hand-over of USOF Fibre to BSNL, for generating revenues. BBNL has been merged into BSNL in accordance with the cabinet approval to realize better synergies.

- (iv) The debt servicing obligation of the Company will be reduced/deferred with the issue of Sovereign Guarantee Bonds.
- (v) The viability gap funding of Rs. 13,789 crore (FY 2014-15 to 2019-20) and Rs. 7,200 crore (FY 2020-21 to 2025-26) will be used to address the losses incurred in the rural wireline telephony segment has been approved.

**(ix): Total outstanding debt of of BSNL as on date.**

**As on 31.12.2024 the total external debt of BSNL are Rs 17,301 Cr (provisional).** Details are as under:

**In Rs. Cr**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Amount of borrowing</b>	<b>Unamortized portion of processing fee</b>	<b>Amount in financial statements</b>
Bonds (Series-I)	8,500	12	8,488
Bonds (Series-IIA)	4,185	2	4,183
Bonds (Series-IIIA)	475	0.35	475
Bonds (Series-IIIB)	1,308	0.28	1,308
Bonds (Series-IIIC)	276	0.22	276
Bank Overdraft	2,562	NA	2,562
Term Loans from Banks	11	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,316</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17,301</b>

### **Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) Ltd**

61. ITI Limited was established in 1948 as the first Government Departmental factory of independent India. Started with the vision of attaining self-reliance in the field of Telecommunications needs of the Country, the first manufacturing plant was set up at Bangalore. The Government of India holds majority equity stake (Govt. of India – 89.97% & Govt. of Karnataka- 0.03%) in the Company.

**Revenue and working expenses of ITI are as follows :**

**(Rs. in crore)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
<b>Targeted Revenue from Operation (Net)</b>	2723	2569	2244	3245.62#	3408.09^
<b>Total Income</b>	2115	1448	1308	1565.89*	3458.09^

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	1995	1808	1877	1727.08*	3379.05^
<b>Net profit/ loss</b>	120	-(360)	-(569)	-(161.19)*	79.04^

# Estimated for the FY 2024-25

\* Actual Audited as on 30 September 2024

^ Estimated for the FY 2025-26

**62.** Main source of revenue and items of expenditure of ITI:

<b>Sl. NO.</b>	<b>Source of Revenue</b>	<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Items of Expenditure</b>
1.	Sale of Goods (i) Finished Goods (ii) Traded Goods	1.	Direct Material Cost (i) Cost of Material consumed (ii) Purchase of Stock in Trade
2.	Sale of Services	2.	Installation & Maintenance Charges
3.	Other Income	3.	Employee benefit Expenses
		4.	Finance Cost
		5.	Other Exp. ( Administrative and Selling expenses )

**63.** While submitting details regarding the Revenue target for the year 2024-25, achievements made and reasons for not meeting the target the Department stated as follows:-

Revenue target for the year 2024-25 was Rs 3,245.62 Cr (exclusive of taxes). Achievement is Rs 1,536.18 Cr (exclusive of taxes) as on 30 September 2024. ITI Ltd. is hopeful of achieving the set target by the end of FY 2024-25.

Challenges faced to increase Revenue earning are as under:-

- Limited cash flow and shortage of working capital.
- Due to delay in the availability of raw material, long lead time in procurement, non-availability of manpower and constraints in transportation and logistics.
- Delay in realization of payment receivables.
- Competition in the market from private telecom vendors.
- Higher rate of obsolescence of products in Telecom technologies.
- Entry Level barriers due to lack of requisite experience in place of Proof of Concept demonstration to qualify for a tender. (Lop Qn No 111)

**64.** Projected Revenue and expenditure for the year 2025-26 and measures being taken to achieve the revenue targets as submitted by the Department are as follows:-

<b>Projected Performance</b>	<b>(₹ in Crs)</b>
Turnover Including GST (A)	4,015.24
Revenue from operations (NET) (B)	3,408.09
Other Income (C)	50.00
<b>Total Revenue (D= B+C)</b>	<b>3,458.09</b>
Material Cost	2,836.05
Employee Cost	201.00
Other Expenses	92.00
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,129.05</b>
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>279.04</b>
Finance Cost	198.00
Depreciation	52.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES (E)</b>	<b>3,379.05</b>
<b>Net Profit ( D- E )</b>	<b>79.04</b>

65. Budget Allocated to ITI Ltd. for Capex is as under:-

(Rs. in crore)

<b>Proposed/BE/RE/Actual</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
<b>Proposed</b>	300.00	400.00	220.00	168.00	105.50
<b>BE</b>	80.00	200.00	160.00	168.00	105.50
<b>RE</b>	80.00	187.00	NIL	59.00	<b>NA</b>

66. When asked about the Utilization of funds by ITI Ltd. since 2020-21, the Department submitted the following information (in Rs. Cr.):-

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Amount sanctioned</b>	<b>Cumulative amount sanctioned since 2014</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure (Utilization done)</b>	<b>Cumulative expenditure since 2014 (cumulative utilization)</b>	<b>% achievement (cumulative expenditure/ cumulative amount sanctioned)</b>
2014-15 to 2019-20	769	769	348.41	348.41	45.30%
2020-21	105	874	70	418.41	47.87%
2021-22	71.56	945.56	288.15	706.56	74.72%
2022-23	187	1132.56	71.11	777.67	68.66 %
2023-24	NIL	1132.56	53.36	831.03	73.37%
2024-25	59	1191.56	10.90*	841.93*	70.66%

**Telecommunications Consultant India Limited (TCIL)**

67. The details of Revenue and working expenses of Telecommunications Consultant India Limited (TCIL) as submitted by the Department are:

(Rs. In Crores)

Year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Income Target*	1,876.00	1,876.00	2,251.00	3,070.00	3,385.00
Total Income	1,595.70	2,001.70	2,603.46	-	-
Total Expenditure	1,554.42	1,940.13	2,491.25	-	-
Balance	41.28	61.57	112.21	-	-

\* Revenue Target as per MoU for 2024-25.

68. Regarding main source of revenue and items of expenditure of TCIL, the following was submitted :

Main source of income are from Turnkey Projects, Maintenance / Service Contracts & Consultancy, whereas major items of expenditure are purchase of material, Sub – contract expenditure, employees benefit expenses, Administrative expenses etc.

**(69 A) On being asked about Revenue target for the year 2024-25, achievements made and reasons for not meeting the targets, if any, the following was stated:**

TCIL's revenue target for the year 2024-25 is ₹ 3,070.00 Crore and the same is expected to achieve the target.

**Challenges faced to increase Revenue earning;**

- Low capital base and huge requirement of working capital.
- Deficient funding for Telecom projects by Multilateral Funding Agencies.
- Competition from OEMs, PSUs and private entities.
- Substantially decreased margins in global/domestic tenders on account of increased competition.
- Procedures and compliances, especially being a PSU, makes it difficult to compete with private players.
- Fewer businesses being awarded on nomination. TCIL competes in public tendering process for obtaining business.
- Rapidly changing and evolving technologies.

**(69 B) Regarding Projected Revenue and expenditure for the year 2025-26 and measures being taken to achieve the revenue targets, the Department stated:**

The projected Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2025-26 is ₹ 3,385.00 Crore and Rs. 3,262.00 Crore respectively.

Measures being taken to achieve the targets: - Aggressive Bidding in India and Abroad.

- Entering in New markets & New Areas
- Timely execution of project using PM tools & close monitoring through frequent project reviews.

69. The details of Revenue and working expenses are as follows:-

(Rs. In Crores)

Year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Income Target*	1,876.00	1,876.00	2,251.00	3,070.00	3,385.00
Total Income	1,595.70	2,001.70	2,603.46	-	-
Total Expenditure	1,554.42	1,940.13	2,491.25	-	-
Balance	41.28	61.57	112.21	-	-

\* Revenue Target as per MoU for 2024-25

70. As regards the assistance required from the Government, the Department stated as follows:-

- As BSNL and ITI are being awarded works on nominations basis, similarly certain percentage (Preferably 25%) of all Central Government IT & Telecom projects be awarded to TCIL as project management Agency on nomination basis . TCIL being project based organisation, TCIL can deliver projects more efficiently, if TCIL is awarded works on nomination.
- TCIL be considered for preparing all Tenders/RFPs in the field of IT & Telecom for all central Government projects, like outsourcing their Tendering works to TCIL , so that TCIL can better manage the implementation of all software, IT and Telecom projects through effective partners.
- TCIL being experienced in executing projects abroad, all Central Government funded projects to other countries be offered to TCIL for implementing the IT & Telecom projects including such projects in all Indian Embassies in various countries.
- In line with the policy of the Government, TCIL will have to bring its IPO sooner or later. The EBITDA & Profit Margins, Order Booking & its quality, Revenue growth & Net worth are of prime importance in achieving better valuation. It is imperative that TCIL pursue high margin business including business in private sector, which requires high capital investment, working capital and therefore requires financial support. Govt. may consider financial support in the above lines to strengthen the Company's pursuit for higher financial performance. TCIL has a cumulative order booking (available work front) of approximately Rs 9,220 Cr as on date. This includes projects in pipeline of ₹ 2,500 Cr - ₹ 3,000 Cr., requiring Letter of Credit (LC) facilities for OEM payments (45-50% of costs) with cash flow cycle of over

nine months. Therefore, TCIL requests exemption from payment of dividend for 5 years and working capital funding of Rs 1,000 Cr.

## Part-II

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **DoT Budget**

In adherence to the annual budgetary exercise, the Department of Telecom (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications laid their Demand No. 13 seeking allocation for the financial year 2025-2026 on 11.02.2025 in the Lok Sabha. The Department Related Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology in accordance with their mandate have thoroughly examined the Demands for Grants 2025-26 pertaining to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and have made certain Observations/ Recommendations which are detailed in the following paragraphs:

#### **Budgetary Allocations and Utilizations during 2025-2026**

##### ***Budgetary Allocations and Utilizations***

1. According to the detailed Demands for Grants laid by DoT, the Committee note that there have been significant variations in both Revenue and Capital Expenditure for the FY 2021-22 to 2025-26. The revenue section reveals that the actuals peaked at Rs.66280.44 crores in 2022-23 before declining sharply to Rs.33067.19 crores in 2023-24. The actuals for the year 2024-25 upto December was Rs.26864.48 crores while the Revised Estimates was Rs.57169.79 crores, suggesting that there may be a shortfall in achieving the targets for 2024-25. The projected revenue for 2025-26 as per the Budget Estimate is Rs.35851.50 crores. On the Capital Expenditure front, there has been a steep rise from Rs.6397.74 crores in 2021-22 to Rs.82646.52 crores in RE 2024-25. The Committee also note that the actual spending upto December, 2024 has been Rs.7445.26 crores. Further, the Budget Estimate (BE) capital outlay for 2025-26 is Rs.73784.76 crores. As seen, the total financial outlay for both the Capital and Revenue expenditure has been fluctuating from Rs.139816.31 crores being the RE of 2024-25 to Rs.109636.26 crores for 2025-26. The Committee opine that such fluctuations indicate inconsistencies in

implementing the projects that are undertaken with long term commitment. The Committee are of the view that the projections should confine to financial utilization of approved outlays as physical achievement of targets reflect realistic assessment. The Committee desire that the Department should ensure proper planning and management as there are significant variations at RE as well as actual implementation stages and also take prudent measures for effective utilization of the allocated funds.

The Committee note that the BE for FY 2024-25 (Revenue) section was Rs.38475.54 crores which was increased to Rs.57169.79 crores in FY 2024-25 RE. The 2024-25 revenue expenditure which was revised upwards by nearly ₹19,000 crores mid-year, signals inadequacy in initial projections. The Committee are of the considered view that budget estimation methods should be based on sound financial principles and prudent commercial practices so as to are necessary to prevent drastic fluctuations between BE and RE figures. More accurate forecasting and adequate planning using data-driven financial modelling, historical expenditure trends, and anticipated sectoral needs can lead to better budgetary proposals. The Committee desire that the Department should focus on creating a flexible contingency mechanism that allows the reallocation of unspent funds to high-priority areas within the telecom sector, ensuring that every rupee allocated contributes effectively to national digital infrastructure goals.

#### **Recommendation No.2 :**

The Committee note that in respect of Capital allocation, the Department could only utilize less than one-tenth during FY 2024-25 upto December, 2024. While submitting the reasons, the Department has stated that spectrum cost of Rs.61799.62 crores remained entirely unspent. Further, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) network for Defence services had utilized only 34% of the allotted money resulting in very less utilization in Capital allocation. Detailed examination has revealed that even though maximum share of budget allocation was for the revival plan of BSNL and MTNL its utilization has been very limited to the tune of 14%. The spectrum fund had remained entirely unspent despite having

highest allocation of Rs.61799.62 crores. The Committee observe that the spending pattern in Capital section has been in a mixed execution pace with certain areas having full utilization while the progress in others is tardy. The Committee further note with concern that while utilization in certain areas is encouraging, at the same time while poor utilization in other areas needs attention in order to avoid the same during the Financial Year 2025-26. Therefore, the Committee would like to call upon the Department for concerted efforts in these issues in order to ensure proper and effective utilization of precious fund.

### **Recommendation No.3 :**

Noting the revenue expenditure pattern for FY 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Committee observe that there has been a significant shortfall in spending by the Department. The BE for revenue expenditure in FY 2024-25 was revised to Rs.57169.79 crores from Rs.38475.54 crores that was initially allocated. However, upto December, 2024 only Rs.26864.48 crores had been spent which was less than 50%. Reasons attributed for the shortfall in spending have been that revised allocation of funds was done only in January, 2025 leaving limited time for effective utilization. Further, for FY 2025-26, the allocation has been reduced to Rs.35851.50 crores against the proposed revenue expenditure of Rs.42557.88 crores indicating the efforts to moderate expenditure based on previous under-utilization trends. The Committee recommend that the Department may take suitable measures to improve financial planning and fund disbursement mechanism so as to ensure that budget allocations are received well in advance. A more structured quarterly disbursement system with predictable allocation schedules can mitigate these issues and enable smoother execution of projects and expenditures. Additionally, process simplifications and better coordination between various stakeholders, including telecom operators, infrastructure providers, and Government agencies, should be implemented to expedite fund absorption. Reducing bureaucratic delays in project approvals and fund release can enhance efficiency and prevent last-minute spending rushes, which often lead to suboptimal financial decisions.

#### **Recommendation No.4 :**

The main sources of revenue receipts of the Department are License Fee, Spectrum Usage Charges and Spectrum Auction receipts. The License Fee receipts has been Rs.16614.36 crores in 2021-22, Rs.20316.28 crores in 2022-23, Rs.36363.17 crores in 2023-24 and Rs.13991.41 crores in 2024-25 upto 31.12.2024. The estimates for FY 2025-26 has been Rs.27,300 crores. Under the category of Spectrum Usage Charges, the receipts has been Rs.7511.71 crores in FY 2021-22, Rs.5743.62 in 2022-23, Rs.13065.18 in FY 2023-24 and Rs.2305.15 crores in 2024-25 upto 31.12.2024. For FY 2025-26, the projected receipt is Rs.3500 crores. Further, the details of receipt under Spectrum Auction Receipts are Rs. 60814.06 crores in FY 2021-22, Rs.37816.00 crores in FY 2022-23, Rs.42617.89 crores in 2023-24 and Rs.41452.56 crores in 2024-25 upto 31.12.2024. For FY 2025-26 Rs.44744.27 crores is the estimated Spectrum Auction Receipts.

While examining the factors affecting revenue receipts, the Department, inter-alia, submitted that revenue of telecom operators, regulatory policies, technological advancements such as 5G, 6G, market competition, subscriber growth and demands, pricing strategy, infrastructure etc. affect the revenue receipts. Further, the Department submitted that as a part of telecom reforms, Spectrum Usage Charges(SUC) have been reduced to zero for the spectrum acquired through auction held in 2022 and subsequent years. Furthermore, the Department submitted that reforms introduced in September, 2021 are expected to decrease the cost of operations for TSPs, facilitate foreign investment and increase ease of doing business for TSPs. The Department also submitted that these reforms would also increase revenue for TSPs and thereby increase the AGR based revenue receipts of the Government of India. Elaborating upon the steps taken by the Department to achieve targets during FY 2025-26, the Department stated that the measures taken included (a) facility to make online paperless payments; (b) fully Digital and paperless submission of financial documents; (c) online grievance resolution process; and (d) and continuous monitoring of receipts of spectrum deferred instalments and

spectrum usage charges. The Committee hope that these measures taken by the Department would augment the revenue receipts and achieve the intended objectives. The Committee urge the Department to periodically monitor the effectiveness of the measures that are being put in place for increasing revenue receipts.

**Recommendation No.5 :**

On the issue of auction of Spectrum , the Committee wish to draw attention of the Ministry to the CAG Report No. 20 of 2015 which raised significant concerns about the lack of due diligence in the auction of spectrum for Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) services, particularly highlighting deficiencies in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA). The NIA allowed UAS, CMTS, and ISP operators to bid for the same BWA spectrum, despite their licenses governing the usage of the spectrum differently. This created confusion and potential misuse of the spectrum. Post-auction, M/s Infotel (now Reliance Jio Infocomm) requested network codes to offer voice services beyond the scope of their ISP license. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) facilitated this request by allowing Infotel to migrate to a Unified License at prices set in 2001, granting them an undue financial advantage of ₹3,367.29 crore. Additionally, despite the auction occurring, the rollout of BWA services remained negligible, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the auction process. To address these issues in future, the Committee recommend that the NIA framework for spectrum auctions be more clearly defined, particularly regarding the scope of spectrum usage for different classes of licensees. This would prevent ambiguity and ensure that only operators with the appropriate licenses and requirements can bid for specific spectrum bands. The Committee further recommend that migration pricing for operators should be aligned with current market rates to prevent financial advantages that are not justifiable. A robust mechanism for monitoring the progress of service rollouts should also be put in place, with penalties for delays to ensure that the spectrum is utilized efficiently. In addition, a post-auction review mechanism should be established to ensure that operators use the spectrum according to the terms of the auction. The Committee are of the view that increasing transparency in the

auction process, with clear communication to stakeholders, would enhance public confidence and ensure the process is fair and effective and implementing these measures would make spectrum auctions more transparent, efficient, and beneficial for all stakeholders including for the consumers.

**Recommendation No.6 :**

Universal Service Obligation Fund(USOF) was created w.e.f 1.4.2002 in pursuance of The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 to provide financial support to the telecom service in commercially unviable rural and remote areas of the country. This is an attached office of DoT headed by an Administrator appointed by the Central Government. With effect from 26.06.2024, USOF has been renamed as Digital Bharat Nidhi(DBN). As per the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, Licence Fee includes Universal Access Levy which is charged at the rate of 5% of the adjusted Gross Revenue of the telecom licences. The fund collected under UAL goes to the Consolidated Fund of India and it is non-lapsable in nature. The outflow from Consolidated Fund of India to USOF is through regulatory provisions of the Ministry of Finance each year based on requirement of USOF. The Department has submitted that since inception of the then USOF in FY 2002-03 and subsequent renaming as DBN on 26.6.2024, UAL amounting upto Rs.171590.68 crores has been collected upto 31.12.2024. The balance of UAL amount available as on 31.12.2024 is Rs.86359.77 crores. Further, the Department has stated that the Government has approved committed expenditure of Rs.1.3 lakh crores for Bharat Net Scheme for next 10 years on 04.08.2023 alongwith other committed liabilities for other ongoing schemes. While reviewing the performance of the schemes under DBN, the Committee note that under amended Bharat Net Programme, BSNL has given notice for inviting tenders for selection of Project Implementing Agency(PIA). The selection of PIA is for development (creation, upgradation, operation and maintenance) of Middle-mile Network of Bharat Net on Design, Build, Operate and Maintain Model. The Department has submitted that RFP was floated by BSNL for selection of Project Implementation Agencies(PIAs) for 16 packages(excluding Eight State led Model states) on 15.02.2024 and out of 16

packages that were opened on 07.08.2024, advance work order for 6 packages have been issued and further Master Service Agreement has been signed between BSNL and respective PIAs for three packages and evaluation of remaining packages are ongoing. RFP for selection of Independent Engineer (04 packages) for overseeing work of PIAs in 16 packages was opened on 15.10.2024 and RFP for Independent Engineer (02 packages) for overseeing work of PIAs in Eight packages (under State led model) was opened on 18.10.2024. Technical bids are under evaluation.

Submitting information on Mobile Projects, the Department has stated that the delay in installation and supply of indigenously developed and domestically manufactured equipment is the main cause for the shortfall in schemes namely 4G Saturation Scheme and LBE Phase-I upgradation, Border Out Post(BOP)/Border Intelligence Post(BIP) etc. The Department has submitted that in order to achieve the targets , multi cornered approach has been taken up at various levels for resolution of issues in the projects and for resolving roadblocks if any and also assisting in getting clearances for projects. The Committee urge the Department to finalise the technical bids which are under evaluation at the earliest and ensure periodic monitoring and expeditious implementation of amended Bharat Net Programme. With Further, the Committee are of the considered opinion that the initiatives of the Department would fructify and intended objectives would be successfully achieved. The Committee may be apprised of the result.

#### **Recommendation No -7**

The Committee note that budget execution for both Capital and Revenue Expenditure in the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) highlights significant gaps in fund utilization across key telecom infrastructure projects. The RE for CAPEX Expenditure for FY 2024-25 is Rs 8609 Cr and the expenditure till 07.02.2025 is Rs. 8609 Cr indicating 100 percent utilisation. Under the head Pensions, the RE 2024-25 was Rs 23,128 Cr , the expenditure till 07.02.2025 was Rs 18,1864 Cr amounting to 82 % of fund utilization. Under Bharat Net , the RE for FY 2024-25 was Rs 6,500 Cr and the expenditure till 07.02.2025 is Rs 3,145 Cr amounting to 48% of fund utilization, the RE for FY 2024-25 for OFC Network for Defence was Rs 1316 Cr, the expenditure till

07.02.2025 is Rs 448 cr amounting to 34% of fund utilization, the RE for 2024-25 for Training (NICF Building) was Rs 25 cr and the expenditure till 07.02.2025 is Rs 15 cr amounting to 60% of fund utilization, the RE for 2024-25 for PLI Scheme was Rs 1451 cr and the expenditure till 07.02.2025 is Rs 111 cr amounting to a meagre 8% of fund utilization. The Committee note with serious concern that overall, only 18% of the total revised capital budget and 75% of the revenue budget have been utilized, underscoring execution bottlenecks that need urgent attention and resolution.

The Committee note that the mixed spending patterns in key telecom projects indicate project implementation delays, procurement inefficiencies, administrative bottlenecks, and inadequate absorption capacity in critical areas such as BharatNet and telecom R&D. The Committee is particularly concerned about the abysmal low utilization of funds in the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme (8%) and International Cooperation (21%), as these initiatives are essential for strengthening indigenous telecom manufacturing and enhancing India's global presence in the sector.

In view of above challenges, the Committee recommend for immediate resolution of bottlenecks in Spectrum Allocation and BharatNet Execution. The slow pace of fund utilization in BharatNet (48%) highlights delays in project implementation, which directly affects last-mile connectivity in rural areas. The Committee recommend that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) establish a quarterly monitoring mechanism to track BharatNet's progress, ensuring timely approvals, faster clearance of Right of Way (RoW) permissions, and streamlined coordination with State Governments. Additionally, the Committee urge the DoT to explore public-private partnerships and innovative funding models to accelerate infrastructure deployment. The Committee are of the considered view that addressing the bottlenecks would definitely enhance BharatNet's execution efficiency and ensure the timely realization of India's digital connectivity goals.

## **Recommendation No.8**

### ***Strengthening Fund Absorption Capacity in R&D and the PLI Scheme***

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, meant to boost telecom manufacturing, has seen only 8% utilization, raising concerns about low industry participation. Similarly, research and development allocations, such as DBN R&D – TTDF, the RE for FY 2024-25 was Rs 200 cr, the expenditure till 07.02.2025 is Rs. 99 cr i.e., less than (50%) only. The Committee recommend the DoT to review and revamp the PLI Scheme's disbursement model in order to ensure that funds reach eligible manufacturers on time. The eligibility criteria may be simplified, and incentive structures be strengthened to encourage maximum MSMEs to participate in telecom equipment production. Additionally, the Committee recommend for wider collaboration with academic institutions and startups to accelerate telecom R&D and also ensure that funds allocated for innovation and larger productivity are fully utilized within the fiscal year.

## **Recommendation No.9 :**

### ***Quarterly Expenditure Monitoring and Flexible Reallocation Mechanism***

As per details furnished by the Department during FY 2024-25 out of the RE of Rs 72,028 cr for Revival plan of BSNL and MTNL, Rs 10,228 cr has been spent till 07.02.2025 amounting to just 14 percent fund utilization. While the expenditure under CAPEX for RE 2024-25 was Rs 8609 cr, the full amount has been spent till 07.02.2025 and under the Head ,spectrum cost, out of Rs 61,799.62 cr, NIL amount has been spent. The Department have stated that an amount of Rs. 61,799.62 crores pertaining to Capital infusion of BSNL(for spectrum allocation) will be utilized in the month of March, 2025.

Examining the submissions by the Department the Committee find that certain projects, such as the Revival Plan for BSNL & MTNL, show full utilization in some areas but at the same time non- underutilization in others (e.g., Spectrum Cost 0%, AGR dues 100%). This highlights the need for better

**budgetary planning and real-time fund reallocation to avoid fund stagnation in unutilized areas.**

**The Committee recommend for the institutionalization of a quarterly expenditure review mechanism to identify non-utilized funds and undertake proactive reallocation to high-priority projects like BharatNet, Defence OFC, and the PLI Scheme. This review may be conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, enabling real-time corrective measures rather than hasty year-end reappropriations. The Committee also recommend for creating an expenditure dashboard that tracks fund utilization across all major schemes, ensuring full transparency and accountability so that telecom infrastructure projects achieve their intended goals within the allocated timeframe, wipe out financial inefficiencies, and strengthen India's digital and strategic communication capabilities.**

**Recommendation No.10 :**

**BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats in the country. Under the project, network infrastructure is being created in partnership with States and the private sector as a national asset for Broadband Highways, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis, to provide affordable broadband services to citizens and institutions in rural areas,. According to the Department, the remaining work of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II is expected to be completed in current financial year i.e., 2024-25.**

**The Phase-I of the project has been implemented through GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Network) technology by using existing fibre of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) - Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), RailTel Corporation Limited (RailTel) and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) for laying underground incremental fibre to bridge the connectivity gap up to the GPs. The Phase-I was completed in December 2017 with the implementation of over 1 lakh GPs. Subsequently, the scope of Phase-I has been enhanced to the revised work-front of about 1.20 lakh. As on 20.01.2025 by laying 3,12,449 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), total 1,20,179 GPs have been made Service Ready under Phase-I (Revised work front).**

For expediting the implementation of BharatNet, the Department has submitted that a modified strategy was approved by Cabinet on 19.07.2017 at an estimated cost of Rs. 42,068 crore, which provides an optimal mix of media (OFC/Radio/satellite) to connect Gram Panchayats (GPs), multiple implementation models - State-led Model, Private Sector through BBNL and CPSU Model through BSNL/PGCIL, provision of Last Mile connectivity (e.g. through Wi-Fi) in GPs, etc. As on 20.01.2025 under BharatNet Phase II, by laying 3,80,250 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), 89,112 GPs have been made Service Ready. Further, 5,032 GPs have been made Service Ready on Satellite media. In total, 94,144 GPs have been made Service Ready under the BharatNet under Phase-II in the Country.

On the overall progress of BharatNet (Phase-I + Phase-II), the Department have informed that 2,09,291 GPs have been made Service Ready on OFC media by laying 6,92,699 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) as on 20.01.2025. Further, 5,032 GPs have been made Service Ready on Satellite media. Total 2,14,323 GPs have been made Service Ready under the BharatNet project in the Country.

The Department have further stated that BharatNet connectivity in remaining 47,000 GPs (including satellite GPs) has been planned under Amended BharatNet Program for which RFP is under progress in BSNL. The Committee observe that the implementation of BharatNet Project has faced challenges on account of covering difficult terrains (including Hilly/Rocky), Right of Way(RoW) issues and also difficulty in accessing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas resulting in shortfall of targets fixed. Hence it is being continuously revisited and revised. The Committee desire the RFP to be completed in a time bound manner. They hope that the measures taken to address the above issues would enable effective implementation of the Project and achieve the intended targets. The Committee may be apprised of the outcomes of the efforts of the Department.

### **Recommendation No.11 :**

#### ***Increasing BharatNet Utilization through Targeted FTTH Expansion and Rural Digital Services***

The Committee have been informed that as of January 2025, only 12.24 lakh Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) connections have been activated. Similarly, while 1,04,574 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have installed Wi-Fi hotspots, actual rural broadband penetration remains low. The Committee note that despite BharatNet's infrastructure rollout, utilization remains a challenge. *In order to ensure optimum utilization of BharatNet Utilization through Targeted FTTH Expansion and Rural Digital Services*, the Committee recommend that the Department should launch an Incentivized Rural Digital Adoption Programme under BharatNet Udyami, offering subsidies or revenue-sharing models for local entrepreneurs to set up and manage FTTH and Wi-Fi services. Additionally, a mandatory digital integration policy should be introduced, ensuring that all government institutions (schools, PHCs, post offices, etc.) actively use BharatNet for e-governance, telemedicine, and digital education, thereby increasing real-time data consumption and network usage. Further, as per the Amended BharatNet programme approved by the Union Cabinet on 04.08.2023, it is proposed to provide 1.5 crore rural home fibre connections distributed across all States/UTs with priority to cover Government institutions including schools, Primary Health Centers, Anganwadis, Panchayat offices etc., using the BNU model over the next five years. In this context, the Committee desire to be updated with the latest achievements related to the project.

### **Recommendation No.12:**

#### ***Enhancing Last-Mile Connectivity and Utilization in Rural Areas***

The Department has set ambitious targets for BharatNet and FTTH expansion; however, last-mile connectivity and effective utilization remain key challenges. As per the Department's submission, only 12.24 lakh FTTH connections have been provided under BharatNet as of January 2025, while the target for March

2026 stands at 18 lakh connections. Similarly, the installation of 1,04,574 Wi-Fi hotspots across Gram Panchayats (GPs) suggests that while infrastructure exists, its actual usage remains suboptimal. The Committee notes with concern that despite the significant infrastructure rollout, BharatNet's potential remains underutilized.

To address this gap and ensure widespread adoption, the Committee recommends the Department to introduce a Last-Mile Connectivity Acceleration Program (LMCAP) under BharatNet Udyami with targeted interventions. This could include a Localized Entrepreneurship Model, where rural entrepreneurs are empowered through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, allowing trained local service providers to manage and expand FTTH and Wi-Fi networks under a revenue-sharing framework. Additionally, the Department could implement Subsidized Internet Plans, ensuring tiered broadband pricing to make internet access affordable for rural households while offering free connectivity to essential public institutions such as schools, PHCs, Anganwadis, and police stations. Furthermore, to drive sustained data consumption and maximize BharatNet's impact, the Committee recommends mandatory integration of all government services in BharatNet-covered areas, ensuring that e-governance, telemedicine, and digital education are exclusively accessed via BharatNet leading to the transition of BharatNet to a catalyst for digital empowerment in rural India.

**Recommendation No.13 :**

***Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region***

The Committee notes that the Government has been implementing the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region to enhance mobile connectivity in uncovered villages and along National Highways. Under this initiative, 2004 towers were initially planned for Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. However, as of September 2024, 1,358 towers have been installed, covering 1,246 villages and 283 National Highway locations, while 372 sites were

dropped due to pre-existing mobile coverage, migration of population, and other issues. Additionally, the project in Meghalaya, which initially covered 1,164 villages and 11 National Highway sites, underwent revisions due to site deletions and additions, leading to a revised scope of 442 sites covering 637 villages and three National Highway locations. The rollout period, originally set for September 2022, has been extended multiple times and is now targeted for completion by March 2025. Further, the project for providing mobile services in Arunachal Pradesh and two districts of Assam is underway, covering 1,683 villages in Arunachal Pradesh and 691 villages in Assam, with an extended deadline of March 2025.

In light of the challenges in the North-Eastern Region, the Committee recommend the Department to expedite the resolution of forest and defense clearance issues by establishing a dedicated inter-Ministerial task force. Additionally, given the region's difficult terrain, satellite-based connectivity and innovative technologies such as High-Altitude Platform Stations (HAPS) may be explored to provide seamless coverage. The Committee further recommend for closer collaboration with State Governments to ensure land availability and prevent further delays in tower installation. Additionally, the sustainability of these projects should be ensured by promoting community-based management of telecom infrastructure, integrating digital inclusion programmes, and enabling partnerships with local entrepreneurs to provide digital services.

**Recommendation No.14 :**

***Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Islands***

The Committee note that under the plan for Andaman & Nicobar Islands, 82 towers were to be set up for mobile services in 85 uncovered villages, along with 42 towers to bridge gaps in mobile connectivity along NH-4 (formerly NH-223). While the project faced delays due to logistical issues, forest permissions, and land constraints, 66 sites have been commissioned so far. Additionally, the Submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) project connecting Kochi to Lakshadweep was completed and dedicated to the nation on January 3, 2024, with a total estimated route length of 1,772 km and a financial

implication of ₹1,072 crore. Further, the Department is supporting the augmentation of telecom infrastructure in Lakshadweep at a total cost of ₹62.86 crore, which includes upgrading 17 existing 2G towers to 4G, installing 20 new 4G towers, and creating a 225 km OFC network for Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) services.

The Committee observe that significant progress has been made under the telecom development initiatives in island territories, including the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. Given the strategic significance of these islands, the Committee recommend that the Department ensure timely completion of the remaining towers in Andaman & Nicobar by resolving pending permissions and land issues on priority. In Lakshadweep, the telecom expansion must be accompanied by measures to enhance resilience against extreme weather conditions, ensuring that infrastructure remains functional during cyclones and other natural disasters. The Committee further recommend integrating telecom expansion with the promotion of e-governance, digital healthcare, and remote education services in the islands to maximize the socio-economic benefits of enhanced connectivity. Moreover, to reduce dependence on mainland India for connectivity, localized satellite-based solutions should be explored to provide redundancy and enhance network reliability ensuring that the benefits of telecom expansion reach all uncovered regions, accelerating digital inclusion, economic development, and social empowerment.

**Recommendation No.15 :**

***Aspirational Districts Scheme : Strengthening Implementation and Expediting Project Completion***

According to the Department, the Aspirational Districts Scheme aims to provide 4G-based mobile services to 7,816 uncovered villages across nine States, with projects executed in two phases. The first phase covered 502 villages in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, with agreements signed in March 2021 at a cost of ₹414 crore. However, as of the latest update, only 251 villages have been covered, with significant gaps in Rajasthan and Bihar. The second phase, covering 7,287 villages in Andhra

Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Odisha, was awarded in May 2022 at ₹3,765.47 crore, but the project has faced delays, with only 3,804 villages covered so far. Security concerns and untraceable villages have further hindered progress in 540 locations.

Given the critical nature of mobile connectivity in rural and remote areas, the Committee recommend the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to ensure strict adherence to project timelines, with regular milestone-based progress reviews. Since Rajasthan and Bihar have the largest implementation gaps in the first phase, a targetted strategy be devised to accelerate mobile connectivity in these States. Additionally, in security-sensitive areas, DoT may explore collaboration with local law enforcement agencies and State Governments to facilitate safe execution. To address issues of untraceable villages, an advanced geospatial mapping system be employed to verify locations before project initiation, ensuring that no planned sites remain unimplemented due to logistical challenges. The Committee also recommend that future projects incorporate a contingency buffer to account for unforeseen obstacles such as security threats, local resistance, and infrastructural gaps.

**Recommendation No.16 :**

***Strengthening Mobile Communication Services in LWE-Affected Areas***

The Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Mobile Communication Scheme was launched to enhance connectivity in some of the most remote and conflict-prone regions of India. The scheme has been implemented in two phases:

**LWE Phase-I: Achievements and Gaps**

LWE Phase-I, approved in 2014 at a cost of ₹4,214.28 crore, led to the successful installation and commissioning of 2,343 mobile towers across 10 States. However, the project initially provided only 2G services, limiting its effectiveness in delivering essential digital services such as e-governance, telemedicine, and financial inclusion. As part of an upgradation plan, 297 towers have been upgraded to 4G as of December 2024. While Chhattisgarh has made significant progress (223 out of 525 sites upgraded), other states like

Telangana (0 upgrades), Bihar (only 3 upgrades out of 250 sites), and Uttar Pradesh (only 1 upgrade out of 78 sites) have seen minimal improvements.

### ***LWE Phase-II: Implementation Delays and Challenges***

LWE Phase-II, approved in 2021 with a budget of ₹2,211.11 crore, aims to establish 2,542 4G towers in the LWE affected regions. The project was awarded to Reliance Jio (Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha) and Bharti Airtel (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal). However, implementation has been delayed, with the completion deadline now extended from March 2023 to May 2025.

Out of 1,289 towers in the revised scope, only 1,106 have been commissioned, reflecting a delay in 183 locations. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have significantly lower tower deployment rates. The Committee are concerned to note that Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal which have zero towers commissioned despite being included in the scheme. Additionally, 153 locations are pending for survey due to security concerns.

The Committee recommend the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to accelerate the upgradation of 2G sites to 4G under LWE Phase-I, particularly in states like Bihar, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh, where progress has been abysmally slow. To achieve this, State-wise targets and strict deadlines should be set, with priority given to regions facing the most significant delays. Special interventions be made in areas where telecom operators encounter site expansion challenges. Additionally, for LWE Phase-II, where delays persist in States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, DoT may strengthen accountability by conducting monthly review meetings with service providers and forming State-level task forces to expedite approvals and resolve bottlenecks in project execution.

The Committee observe that security challenges have significantly hindered survey and implementation in 153 locations, delaying project timelines. The Committee recommend that DoT, in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), formulate a Standard Operating Procedure

(SOP) for infrastructure deployment in LWE-affected areas. A joint action plan with State police and paramilitary forces be developed to secure project sites, particularly in high-risk zones like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. In addition, DoT may explore alternative connectivity solutions, such as satellite-based mobile communication, in regions where traditional tower installation is impractical due to security risks or geographical constraints.

Beyond infrastructure deployment, ensuring affordability and service quality is essential for the success of the project. The Committee recommend that telecom providers be mandated to offer affordable prepaid plans in LWE districts to ensure accessibility for rural populations. Furthermore, a third-party audit mechanism be introduced to monitor network uptime, service quality, and coverage, preventing service disruptions. Future projects may invariably consider 5G readiness to enable seamless upgradation without requiring extensive infrastructure overhauls. By implementing above measures, the Committee hope that the Government can ensure improved mobile connectivity in LWE regions which could contribute to economic growth, governance, and security enhancement.

**Recommendation No.17 :**

***Bridging the Digital Divide: Strengthening Tele-Density Through Targeted Financial and Policy Measures***

The Committee note that, based on the data provided by the Department as of 30.11.2024, India has a total of 1187.73 million telephone connections, comprising 527.47 million rural and 660.26 million urban connections. The overall teledensity stands at 84.36, with a significantly higher urban teledensity of 131.53 compared to rural teledensity at 58.23, highlighting the persistent digital divide. Furthermore, wireline teledensity remains low at 2.72, while wireless teledensity accounts for 81.65. In terms of market share, private service providers dominate the telecom sector, holding 91.28% of total telephone connections, whereas public sector undertakings (BSNL and MTNL) account for only 8.72%. Notably, Reliance Jio has the highest share of total

connections at 40.21%, followed by Bharti Airtel at 33.17% and Vodafone Idea at 17.67%.

Given these insights, the Committee recommend that the Department intensify efforts to bridge the rural-urban teledensity gap by expanding affordable and high-quality telecom services in rural areas, particularly through BharatNet and targetted subsidies for rural connectivity. The Committee further emphasize the need to strengthen the wireline segment, especially for broadband expansion, by incentivizing fibre-based infrastructure deployment. Considering the declining market share of public sector telecom providers, the Committee urge the Department to formulate a strategic revival plan for BSNL and MTNL, focusing on service quality improvement, competitive pricing, and digital service integration. Additionally, given the dominance of private players, ensuring fair competition and consumer protection be prioritized through regulatory oversight, while also promoting indigenous telecom manufacturing to enhance sectoral resilience. The Committee are of the concerted opinion that the Government can ensure inclusive and equitable telecom growth and foster digital empowerment across all regions.

**Recommendation No.18 :**

***Enhancing Financial Utilization and Efficiency of PLI Scheme***

The Committee note that under PLI Scheme the Actual expenditure till December 2024 is Rs 13.75 Cr out of RE Rs 1450.97 cr for FY 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 is Rs 1965.50 cr. The Department during the oral evidence before the Committee deposed that the forecast investment for this Scheme is Rs.4,014 crore. For the current year, out of Rs.1,451 crore of RE, Rs.953 crore is likely to be spent. The Committee note that since both MSMEs and non-MSMEs are beneficiaries of the Scheme, the Department should ensure equitable distribution of funds, with targetted interventions to support MSMEs in accessing incentives. If any systemic issues are preventing full utilization, a mid-year review mechanism be established to reallocate funds where they are needed most, preventing non-utilization precious fund.

Additionally, the Department may focus on proactive engagement with industry stakeholders to ensure timely submission of claims and disbursement of incentives. Regular progress tracking and transparent reporting of fund utilization will help in identifying gaps early and taking corrective action, ensuring that the PLI scheme achieves its intended goal of strengthening domestic manufacturing. The Committee further recommend that the Department conduct a detailed assessment of the factors leading to under utilization and introduce measures to improve fund absorption. This could include streamlining disbursal processes and addressing procedural bottlenecks that may be delaying claims and reimbursements. The Committee hope that the Department will be able to utilize the funds allocated fully in the FY 2025-26.

**Recommendation No.19 :**

***Strengthening the Digital Intelligence Unit for Enhanced Cyber security***

The Committee note that the Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU) project, with an outlay of ₹22 crore over five years, has played a crucial role in tackling cybercrime linked to the misuse of telecom resources. The Department has informed that the initiative has led to disconnection of over 2.8 crore fraudulent mobile connections and the freezing of more than 13 lakh WhatsApp accounts. The Committee find that while these achievements highlight the effectiveness of coordinated efforts, there is a need for further strengthening of the DIU through enhanced technological capabilities and greater integration with financial institutions and law enforcement agencies. The Committee recommend increasing investment in AI-driven threat detection systems and real-time data-sharing mechanisms to improve the speed and accuracy of identifying and preventing fraudulent activities.

Given the growing sophistication of cyber fraud, the Committee recommend that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) work closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to establish a seamless, cross-sectoral response framework. A dedicated task force comprising telecom operators,

cybersecurity experts, and digital payment regulators be formed to monitor emerging threats and proactively address vulnerabilities. Additionally, citizen participation is crucial in combating cyber fraud. Through the Sanchar Saathi portal has gained significant traction, with over 10.5 crore hits, the Committee opine that awareness campaigns and digital literacy programmes be expanded to rural and semi-urban areas to ensure that all citizens are equipped to report cyber threats effectively.

Furthermore, financial allocation for the DIU be reviewed periodically to ensure that resources match the evolving nature of cybercrime. A mid-term assessment of the project's impact be conducted to identify gaps in enforcement and suggest course corrections. The Government may also consider establishing a real-time grievance redressal mechanism to support victims of cyber fraud, ensuring that financial losses are minimized and perpetrators are swiftly brought to book and penalized. Strengthening DIU's operational capacity will not only protect citizens but also reinforce India's digital economy by ensuring a safer and more secure telecom ecosystem.

**Recommendation No.20 :**

***Addressing Debt Burden and Financial Efficiency***

The Committee note that the total outstanding debt of BSNL as of December 2024 stands at ₹17,301 crore, with a significant portion tied to Sovereign Guarantee Bonds and bank overdrafts. While the revival package provides some relief through deferred debt servicing and equity infusion, the long-term sustainability of BSNL requires a comprehensive debt management strategy. The heavy financial obligations not only impact operational flexibility but also limit the Company's ability to make competitive market decisions. It is crucial to restructure high-interest borrowings and explore avenues to refinance existing debt at lower interest rates to ease financial strain. Additionally, BSNL's employee remuneration and benefits for 2025-26 are projected at ₹8,422 crore, further adding to financial pressure.

In light of these observations, the Committee recommend that the Department undertake a structured debt management plan for BSNL, focussing on restructuring of high-interest borrowings and refinancing existing debt at lower interest rates to reduce financial liabilities. A phased asset monetization strategy be implemented, prioritizing the leasing or strategic sale of under utilized properties and non-core telecom infrastructure to generate immediate liquidity for debt reduction. The Government may also explore extending additional sovereign guarantees to enable BSNL to secure low-cost financing for critical infrastructure expansion without further burdening its balance sheet.

Furthermore, the Committee recommend that BSNL implement operational efficiency measures to optimize workforce deployment, enhance productivity, and promote digital automation in service operations. Cost-cutting initiatives such as process automation, AI-driven customer service platforms, and streamlining administrative functions be prioritized to reduce overhead expenditures while improving service quality. By aligning debt restructuring with strategic cost optimization, BSNL can enhance its financial stability, improve market competitiveness, and ensure that future investments contribute directly to profitability and long-term sustainability.

**Recommendation No.21 :**

***ITI Limited -Strengthening Financial Liquidity and Operational Efficiency***

The Committee note that ITI Limited, a key public sector enterprise in telecom manufacturing, plays a crucial role in India's telecom infrastructure development. However, the company continues to face significant financial and operational challenges, particularly due to its limited cash flow and shortage of working capital. These constraints hinder ITI's ability to procure raw materials, manage logistics, and sustain operational demands. As per financial data, ITI has been operating at a net loss of ₹569 crore in 2023-24, though a projected net profit of ₹79.04 crore in 2025-26 suggests a potential recovery. Additionally, ITI's high material costs, which are expected to reach ₹2,836.05 crore in 2025-26, pose a significant burden on its financial sustainability. Furthermore, ITI's

revenue streams remain highly dependent on Government contracts, leading to delays in payment receivables and unpredictable cash flows. The Company also faces increasing competition from private players and needs to strengthen its market positioning by leveraging its Government backing and expanding into high-value sectors such as defence, smart cities, and rural broadband.

In view of the above, the Committee recommend that ITI undertake a comprehensive financial restructuring plan to enhance working capital management, optimize costs, and establish strategic partnerships. To improve liquidity, ITI may explore mechanisms such as invoice discounting and supply chain financing, particularly to address delays in payment receivables from Government clients. Additionally, the Company may adopt a strategic sourcing model, engaging multiple vendors and negotiating bulk procurement agreements to mitigate material cost fluctuations and ensure timely supply. Investing in indigenous R&D and next-generation telecom solutions will also help ITI reduce dependency on foreign vendors and enhance its competitiveness in private telecom sector. Furthermore, to improve operational efficiency, ITI should implement digital automation in manufacturing and administration, leveraging AI-driven process optimization and lean manufacturing techniques to reduce operational expenditures while enhancing service delivery.

The Committee also note that ITI's capital expenditure (Capex) allocation has been declining, with only ₹105.50 crore proposed for 2025-26, compared to ₹400 crore in 2022-23. Moreover, Capex utilization has been suboptimal, with cumulative utilization standing at only 70.66% as of FY 2024-25. This reflects inefficiencies in capital investment planning and execution. To address this, the Committee recommend ITI to adopt a structured Capex deployment strategy that prioritizes high-impact projects, particularly in telecom infrastructure and advanced manufacturing technologies. ITI should align its investments with emerging market opportunities such as 5G deployment, private networks, and Government-driven digital transformation initiatives. Additionally, ITI must expand its role in the BharatNet project, leveraging its expertise in optical fiber and telecom equipment to become a key supplier for rural broadband expansion. The Committee feel that merger of BBNL into BSNL

presents an opportunity for ITI to strengthen its participation in PPP projects and smart city initiatives, ensuring long-term revenue sustainability.

To further enhance its future growth prospects, the Committee recommend that ITI may diversify its activities into high-margin technology services such as cybersecurity solutions, enterprise networking, and IoT-based industrial applications thereby, reducing its dependency on traditional telecom manufacturing. Additionally, to overcome entry barriers in securing new tenders, ITI should actively collaborate with technology partners and research institutions to develop proof-of-concept solutions, strengthening its credentials in high-value Government and defence contracts. Establishing joint ventures with global telecom players will also enable knowledge transfer and improve ITI's competitive positioning. By focussing on targeted Capex investments, optimum fund utilization, and strategically expanding into emerging telecom and digital service markets, ITI can transform into a financially independent stable and technologically advanced telecom manufacturing entity.

**Recommendation No.22 :**

***Strategic Support for TCIL's Growth and Competitiveness***

The Department has informed the Committee that TCIL has demonstrated consistent revenue growth, with its turnover increasing from ₹1,595.70 crore in 2021-22 to ₹2,603.46 crore in 2023-24. The Committee have been further apprised of the fact that the Company has set targets of ₹3,070 crore for FY 2024-25 and ₹3,385 crore for FY 2025-26. However, according to the Department, TCIL faces significant challenges, including limited working capital, intense competition from private players and other PSUs, stringent regulatory compliance requirements, and the rapid evolution of telecom technologies. Sustaining this tempo of growth and maintaining a competitive edge to secure high-margin projects will require enhanced financial backing, streamlined procurement mechanisms, and strategic policy support.

Noting above submissions of the Department, the Committee recommend that the Department to take proactive measures to strengthen TCIL's financial and operational standing. To ensure steady revenue inflows and long-term stability,

at least 25% of Central Government's IT and Telecom projects may be considered for giving to TCIL on a nomination basis. Additionally, TCIL be entrusted with preparing tenders and Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Government projects, leveraging its expertise to ensure efficient execution and project management. Given its proven track record in international telecom projects, TCIL may also be prioritized for implementing Government-funded IT and telecom initiatives abroad, including projects in Indian embassies and diplomatic missions.

To enhance liquidity and support expansion, the Committee further recommend that the Government may provide TCIL with additional funds by way of working capital funding. These measures will enable TCIL to pursue high-value projects, strengthen its financial position, and drive long-term growth in the telecom sector and thereby ensure that TCIL continues to play a pivotal role in advancing India's Telecom Infrastructure and global presence.

New Delhi;

18 March, 2025

27 Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY,

Chairperson,

Standing Committee on

Communications and Information  
Technology.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (2024-25)**

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE**

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The Committee sat on Friday, the 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 from 1310 hours to 1412 hours in Committee Room No. '1', Extension to Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson**

**MEMBERS**

**Lok Sabha**

2. Shri Anil Baluni
3. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
4. Shri Devesh Shakya

**Rajya Sabha**

5. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
6. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
7. Dr. Sasmit Patra
8. Shri S. Niranjan Reddy
9. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
10. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

**Secretariat**

- |    |                     |   |                  |
|----|---------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director         |
| 2. | Shri Rajesh Mohan   | - | Deputy Secretary |

## **LIST OF WITNESSES**

### **MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS) (DoT)**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the Officer</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Dr. Neeraj Mittal	Secretary(T) & Chairman, DCC
2.	Shri Manish Sinha	Member(F) - DCC
3.	Shri Niraj Verma	Administrator, DBN (USOF)
4.	Shri Gulzar Natarajan	Addl. Secy(T)
5.	Shri Devendra Kumar Rai	Jt. Secretary (T), DoT
6.	Dr. Sanjay Kumar	Jt. Administrator (F), DoT
7.	Shri B P Sharma	DDG(II), USOF
8.	Shri A. Robert J. Ravi	CMD, BSNL, MTNL & BBNL
9.	Shri Rajesh Rai	CMD, ITI Ltd.
10.	Shri Sanjeev Kumar	CMD, TCIL
11.	Dr. Rajkumar Upadhyay	CEO, C-DOT
12.	Shri Atul Kumar Chaudhary	Secretary, TRAI

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened to examine Demands for Grants (2025-26) related to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) (DoT).

#### ***(The witnesses were then called in)***

3. After welcoming the representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) (DoT) to the sitting of the Committee, the Chairperson dealt with the expenditure pattern of the Department till December 2024 which remained below 50 % of the previously allocated funds. Expressing concern over the Department's actual expenditure till December 2024, he highlighted that unutilized funds could have been allocated and utilized by other Departments. Further, he sought to know reasons behind the reduced budget allocation of ₹1,09,636.26 crore for the upcoming financial year; the decline in capital infusion for BSNL; the progress of the Amended BharatNet Program; the rationale behind the substantial allocation under the Reserve Fund, and the Department's action plan to expedite the collection of License Fees and Spectrum Charges; Details of the work done and the difficulties faced by the Department under the 4G Saturation Project; progress of the work related to agreement with M/s RJIL for three States and M/s BAL for the States signed on 20.05.2022 at a cost of Rs.3765.47 crore; working of Security Lab; Green Passport Lab and NGN Control Lab; the progress delay made by

TCIL in the project relating to establishment of 100 5G use-case labs in educational institutions nationwide and so on.

4. Thereafter, the representatives of DoT introduced themselves to the Committee and made a Power Point presentation highlighting the Organizational Structure, Schemes, Budget, expenditure trends for last few years, physical and financial achievements, etc.

5. The Members then raised a range of queries and concerns, particularly regarding the non-utilization of allocated funds and the Department's action plan for ensuring their effective utilization. Other key issues discussed included the status of the LWE Phase-II Project; cybersecurity; the Sanchar Sathi app; unsolicited commercial communication; the Digital Bharat Nidhi Scheme; the Amended BharatNet Project; the PLI scheme; and the progress of the Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU) Project. Additionally, discussions covered the monetization of MTNL's land assets, functioning of Indian Telephone Industries and C-DOT; achievements and challenges faced by the Department in implementing the saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages across the Country; functioning of the Security Lab; Green Passport Lab and NGN Control Lab; the reasons behind the slow progress of the Defence Spectrum Optical Fiber Cable-based Network for Defence Services Project etc.

6. The representatives of Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications) (DoT) responded to most of the queries raised by the Members. The Chairperson, then, directed that written replies to the points on which information was not readily available may be furnished to the Committee within five days.

7. Thereafter, the Chairperson thanked the representatives of DoT for deposing before the Committee.

**The witnesses then withdrew.**

A copy of verbatim record of the proceedings was kept on record.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (2024-25)**

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE**

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The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 from 1700 hours to 1755 hours in Committee Room No. 'D', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY- Chairperson**

**MEMBERS**

***Lok Sabha***

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
4. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
5. Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav
6. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
7. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
8. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
9. Shri Shafi Parambil
10. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
11. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
12. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
13. Shri Rajesh Verma

***Rajya Sabha***

14. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
15. Dr. Sasmit Patra
16. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
17. Shri S. Niranjana Reddy
18. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                   |   |                      |
|----|-------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Amrish Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary     |
| 3. | Shri Rajesh Mohan | - | Deputy Secretary     |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt four draft Reports on Demands for Grants (2025-26) relating to the Ministries/Departments under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

3. The Committee, then, took up the following four draft Reports for consideration and adoption:-

(i) Draft Report on Demands for Grants (2025-26) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications).

(ii) XXXXXXXX.....XXXXX.....XXXXXXXX.....XXXXXX.....XXXXX

(iii) XXXXXXXX.....XXXXX.....XXXXXXXX.....XXXXXX.....XXXXX

(iv) XXXXXXXX.....XXXXX.....XXXXXXXX.....XXXXXX.....XXXXX

4. The Committee adopted the Reports without modifications.

5. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and present the same to the House during the current Session of Parliament.

**The Committee, then, adjourned.**

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**XXXXXX- Matter not related to the Report.**