

46K villages in Bihar to be connected with OFC Internet by Mar 31, 2021

By TIOL News Service

NEW DELHI, SEPT 22, 2020: WITH recent announcements by Prime Minister on 15th August, 2020, connectivity is to be taken up to the all more than 6 Lakh villages (from the existing GP level) within 1000 days. As a first step towards this goal, Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi launched the project on 21.08.2020 for connecting all 45,945 villages of Bihar on Optical Fibre for providing high-speed internet. This will enable digital revolution to reach the farthest corner of the State.

Prime Minister termed the day as not only historic for Bihar but for the entire country as the Government is taking major steps to make its villages the mainstay of AtmaNirbharBharat and that this is starting from Bihar yesterday.

The Prime Minister said India is one of the leading countries in the world in terms of digital transactions. In August 2020 alone about Rs 3 Lakh Crore worth transactions were made through UPI. With the increase in internet usage, now it is also necessary that the villages of the country have good quality, high speed internet.

Explaining the benefits that accrue through the speedier connectivity, Prime Minister said it would provide access to best of the reading material to the students, along with access to tele-medicine and access to information on seeds, new techniques nationwide markets to the farmers apart from real time data on weather conditions. Farmers can also easily transport their produce all over the country and world, he said.

The Prime Minister said the aim of the Government is to provide Urban facilities to rural areas in the country.

This project will be implemented in a short span of 180 days and will be completed by 31.03.2021 at an approximate cost of Rs. 1,000 Crore through CSC SPV providing 1 Wi-Fi and 5 FTTH connections for one year free of cost to identified Government Institutions, Primary Schools, Anganwadi Centres, Aasha Workers & Jeevika Didi etc. and one Wi-Fi at a public place in every village of Bihar. Rs. 640 Crore of capital expenditure will be borne by the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India.

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad thanked Prime Minister for dedicating various developmental schemes in multiple areas in Bihar, which has been unprecedented for the state. Minister also emphasised on the role CSC is playing in digital delivery of services especially in Bihar.

It is a matter of great pride for me, as Bihar will be the First State in India to Connect all Villages by optical Fiber Network Internet said Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

This project will be executed by combined efforts of Department of Telecom which has already connected 1.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across India with optical fibre internet service, along with Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and Common Service Centres.

CSC has 34,821 Centres throughout the length and breadth of Bihar State. They will utilise this workforce to not only implement this project but also make it professionally run to provide Optical Fibre Internet Services for common citizens at every village of Bihar.

Amongst other dignitaries Governor of Bihar, Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister along with other Central Ministers of Bihar will be part of this launch ceremony.

The Optical Fibre Village Connectivity project has been launched by Department of Telecommunications in order to achieve the dreams of Digital Gram as announced by Prime Minister. It will be implemented by CSC e-Governance Services Ltd., an SPV of Ministry of Electronics & IT. The project aims to provide broadband connectivity in every village of Bihar through Aerial Optical Fibre. Minimum 5 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections and 1 Public WI-Fi shall be installed at every villages. These connections will be given free bandwidth for one year.

Objective of the Project is to convert Village into Digital Villages, enhance Digital empowerment/awareness and to bridge digital divide and bringing digital windows at doorstep. It will lead to inclusive socio-economic growth for rural masses.

Main features of the project include:

- Approach: Outcome based with special focus on Utilization of BharatNet with Service Level Agreement (SLA) commitment
- Financials Implications: Govt. of India would be funding the VGF support of Rs. 640 Cr.
- Socio- Economic Impact Assessment: A socio-economic impact assessment would be carried out by national premier institutions to understand the benefits and success of this pilot project.
- Monitoring of the Project: By the State of Bihar/DoT
- Consumer Redressal Mechanism: A full-fledged customer care service shall be established by CSC-SPV for redressal of consumer grievances.

This project will lead digital services like e-Education, e-Agriculture, Tele-Medicine, Tele-law and other social security schemes to be easily available to all citizens of Bihar at the click of the button.