Broadband Readiness Index for Indian states and UTs(2019-2022)

August 29, 2019
<u>Source</u>: Press Information Bureau

Background

The National Digital Communication Policy (NDCP) 2018 acknowledged the need for building a robust digital communications infrastructure leveraging existing assets of the broadcasting and power sectors including collaborative models involving state, local bodies and the private sector. Accordingly, the policy recommended that a BRI for States and UTs be developed to attract investments and address Right of Way(RoW) challenges across India.

Key highlights

- **The Department of Telecom (DoT) and the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding **(MoU) to develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI)** for Indian States and Union Territories (UT).
- It is being mentioned that the first estimate will be made in 2019 and subsequently every year until 2022.
- The development of BRI will be a **collaborative exercise with stakeholders including State governments and industry associations like** the Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA), the Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). **This will be a first of its kind exercise that will comprehensively measure the development of telecom infrastructure at the sub national level.**

- **The BRI consists of two parts;**

1. **Part I** will focus on **infrastructure development** based on the measurement of **nine parameters.**
2. **Part II** consists of **demand side parameters** which will be captured through **primary surveys**. **It will include indicators such as percentage of households** using computers/ laptops with internet connection, the percentage of households with fixed broadband connection, internet users as a percentage of the population, smart phones density, percentage of households with at least one digitally literate member, etc.

Proposed BRI Indicators

SL NO.	Proposed BRI Indicators
1	Availability of State Policy on RoW and Towers (based on DoT RoW Rules 2016
2	Percentage of ROW cases given permission within 60 days of the first application
3	Availability of a centralized IT Portal for ROW clearances across all Government land and building owning authorities.

4	Adoption of the National Building Code 2016 by the State • State policy to have enabling provisions for access to government lands and buildings for installation of telecom towers • State policy to have enabling provision for 24* 7 telecom operations • Standardized RFP template for smart city implementation – enabling rules promoting non exclusivity and infrastructure sharing in a non-discriminatory manner • Common duct policy based on the Central Government's "Dig Once Policy"
5	Percentage of mobile towers connected with fibre
6	Number of fibre kms per sq. KM/ per capita/ per 100 households
7	Percentage of public institutions / offices connected by FTTX (Hospitals including PHCs, Police stations, Schools and CSCs)
8	Percentage of towers receiving grid supply (Duration: Urban 20 hours; Rural 12 Hours) • Priority electricity connection available to telecom towers in the state • Supply of electricity at affordable/ industrial rates to telecom towers
9	NagarNet –Number of Public Wi-Fi Hotspots in urban areas JanWiFi – Number of Public Wi-Fi Hotspots in rural areas

Significance of BRI

- This index will **appraise the condition of the underlying digital infrastructure** and related factors at the State/UT level.
- Such an exercise **will provide useful insights into strategic choices made by States for investment allocations in ICT programmes.**
- In the spirit of **competitive federalism, the index will**

encourage states to cross learn and jointly participate in achieving the overall objective of digital inclusion and development in India.

- The framework will not only **evaluate a state's relative development but will also allow for a better understanding of a state's strengths and weaknesses** that can feed into **evidence-based policy making**.
- The methodology developed as a part of this research will be adapted and used on an annual basis for **systematic evaluation of state-performance on metrics set out as the goals for 2022** under the new policy.
- As a result, ranking and **understanding State/UT performance** over time will be an important part of the exercise.