

NATIONAL BROADBAND MISSION

April 26, 2020

Context: Ministry of Communications launched National Broadband Mission

- National Broadband Mission is to fulfill all aspirations of the people and enables fast track growth of digital communication infrastructure.
- The vision of the NBM is to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all
- Some of the objectives of the Mission which is structured with strong emphasis on the three principles of universality, **affordability and quality are:**
 - Broadband access to all villages by 2022
 - Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services for across the country and especially in rural and remote areas
 - Laying of incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024
 - Significantly improve quality of services for mobile and internet
 - Develop innovative implementation models for Right of Way (RoW) and to work with States/UTs for having consistent policies pertaining to expansion of digital infrastructure including for RoW approvals required for laying of OFC
 - Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.

- Creation of a digital fiber map of the Digital Communications network and infrastructure, including Optical Fiber Cables and Towers, across the country
- Investment from stakeholders of USD 100 billion (Rs 7 Lakh Crore) including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)
- Address policy and regulatory changes required to accelerate the expansion and creation of digital infrastructure and services
- Work with all stakeholders including the concerned Ministries / Departments/ Agencies, and Ministry of Finance, for enabling investments for the Mission

Other

- Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)-Apart from the higher capital cost of providing telecom services in rural and remote areas, these areas also generate lower revenue due to lower population density, low income and lack of commercial activity. Thus normal market forces alone would not direct the telecom sector to adequately serve backward and rural areas. Keeping in mind the inadequacy of the market mechanism to serve rural and inaccessible areas on one hand and the importance of providing vital telecom connectivity on the other govt charges Universal Access Levy (UAL) and collects Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)