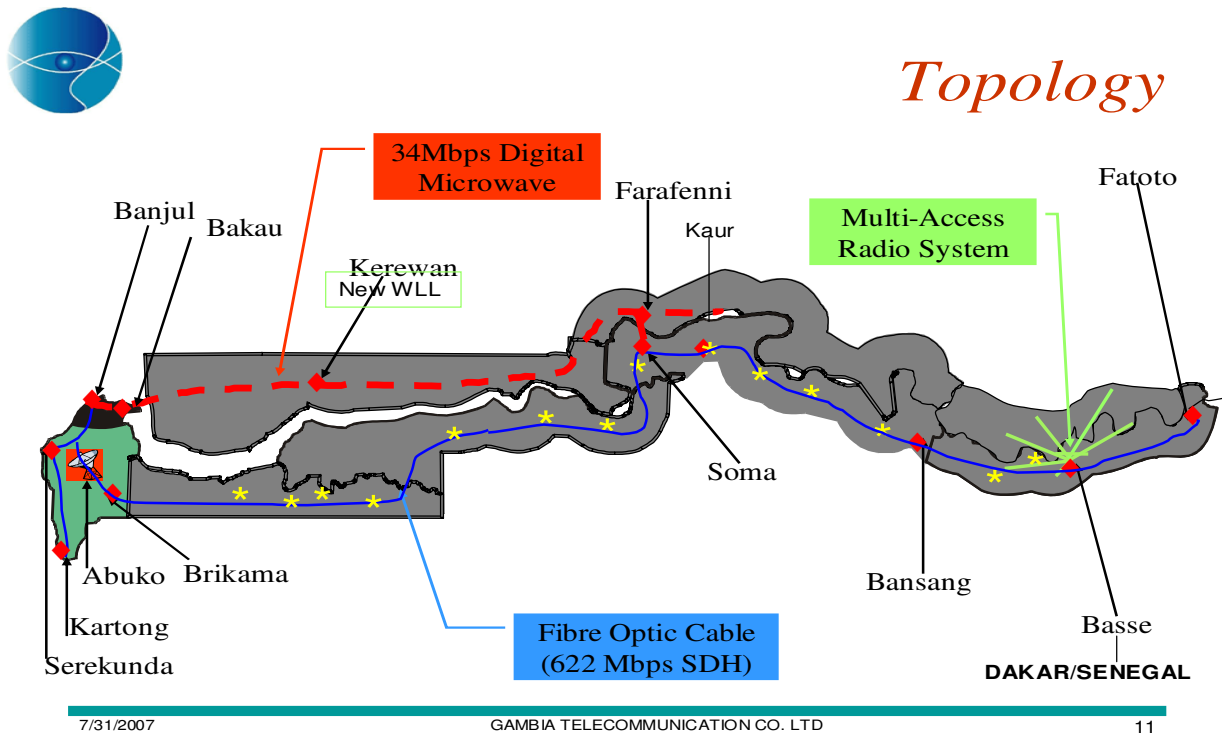


3.1 Production Infrastructure: National communication & Telecommunications link

3.1.1 Telecommunications link

The country has a fixed line telephone penetration rate of 3.1%. The penetration rate of 6% in urban areas and about 1% in the rural areas. Combined with mobile phones there is a total penetration rate increased from 18.35% in 2005 to 21.6% in 2006. Gambia Telecommunication Company (GAMTEL) has laid a fibre optic cable on the south bank of the river Gambia that run across the country.

Figure 1: Topology of Telecommunication Links



In the mobile phone area there are two mobile phone operators in the Gambia – GAMCEL and AFRICEL – with a total customer base 430,000 (2006). In mobile phone sector new expansion were also in plan.

3.1.2 Telecentres

Public telephone access like telecentres is very much wide spread in Banjul, Kanifing municipality and parts of the western region. A number of similar Telecentres exist in the rural areas making telephone service accessible to the general public in almost all parts of the country, which is consistent with ITU guideline.

3.1.3 Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)

There is a need setting up in the Gambia a public key infrastructure the extension of the network and the creation of a National Certification Authority. Also proposed, was the establishing of State services on-line and the development of a legislative and regulatory framework required for the use of ICT within a secured environment. The PKI is a framework of policies for the management of services and software using a public key cryptography and digital signatures for electronic transactions and exchange of information to enhance confidentiality and security.

3.1.4 Communication link

Although ICTs may be meeting the needs of individuals and households in products or services delivered to them, for most individuals and households, even in most developed countries, the direct application of ICT is still relatively limited. There is only one public television station in The Gambia and no private TV stations. Alternative satellite and cable television viewing are also available. There are also 5 private radio stations and one public and three community radio station. Households can take advantage of the available information through radio and television programmes, to increase agricultural productivity, marketing facilities, trading opportunities and thereby reduce on household poverty.