

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2631
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2000
PCO/STD/ISD FRANCHISES
ANANDRAO ADSUL;MANI SHANKAR AIYAR

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have recently liberalised franchises for the Public Telephone booths including PCO/STD/ISD;
- (b) if so, the details thereof relating to the minimum distance between two booths and the policy with respect to the geographic spread of booths in urban and rural areas without access to or with inadequate access to Public Telephone booths;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to associate elected Members of the Legislatures with the Advisory Committees dealing with the telephones and selection of Public Telephone franchises;
- (d) whether the Government propose to increase the commission amount to the said booth owners from 20% to 50% particularly handicapped persons; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof including the exact percentage of commission?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SH.TAPAN SIKDAR)

(a) : Yes, Sir.

(b) : The present policy of the department is to allot STD PCOs to educated unemployed persons. Recently the policy has been reviewed in order to allot those liberally to the educated unemployed persons who volunteer. The PCOs can be located at any place which is easily accessible to the public. The distance restriction between PCOs has not been prescribed keeping in view the following aspects : - to provide more number of PCOs for the benefit of the public at large - to make available option - easy access to Telecom facilities - reduce waiting time at STD booth - reduce long waiting list of prospective STD franchisees to provide job opportunity to more unemployed persons.

(a) There is already a provision for nomination of MLAs/MLCs under the category of `State Legislature` in each and every Telephone Advisory Committee. As regards, allotment of PCOs, those are made on first come first served basis as per registration. Certain category of applicant such as war-widows, SC-ST, handicapped persons and ex-servicemen are given preference in the matter of allotment of STD PCOs. With the allotment of PCOs being made on first come first served basis, there is no need for any committee to decide the allotment of PCOs.

(d) Recently it has been decided to increase the rate of commission of STD PCO franchisees in Urban areas. According to the new rates commission @0.20 paise shall be payable for each unit call. In the Circles where competition from private operators has started, CGMs have powers to allow commission upto 0.30 paise per unit call. Presently there is no need to review the rates of commission.

(e) : Does not arise in view of reply to Part(d).