

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:55
ANSWERED ON:21.11.2001
FIXED TELEPHONES BY PRIVATE OPERATORS
A.D.K. JEYASEELAN

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the target of fixed telephones fixed for private operators;
- (b) the fixed phones so far provided by private operators; and
- (c) the steps taken to ensure that private operators are committed to fulfil the target?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI PRAMO MAHAJAN)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA QUESTION NO. 55 FOR 21ST NOVEMBER, 2001 REGARDING FIXED TELEPHONES BY PRIVATE OPERATORS.

As per National Telecom Policy, 94 (NTP-94) licence agreements entered into with six private basic telephone service operators, 20,17,809 Direct Exchange Lines (DELs) were to be provided during the first three years from the effective date of the licence. The effective date in respect of five licensees was 30.9.1997 and in respect of one licensee was 4.3.1998. Thereafter, licensee has to maintain growth rate of minimum 15% per annum till the stage of telephone on demand is reached.

As per available information, six private basic telephone service operators, who were granted licences in 1997/98 have provided 3,75,605 DELs till 30.9.2001.

Three out of these six basic service operators had commenced their service in the year 2000 only. The operators have been impressed upon to fulfill their committed targets. In order to facilitate faster roll out of the network, the use of hand held terminals in wireless access system within local area has also been permitted which is subject to the outcome of the petition pending before the Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT). With these steps, the number of subscribers has increased from 2,65,976 as on 1.4.2001 to 3,75,605 as on 30.9.2001. Liquidated Damages (LD) for delay in fulfillment of the commitment were recovered from these six basic service licensees as per the provisions of the licence agreement. These licensees have also been asked to submit Additional Performance Bank Guarantee and Deed of Guarantee for fulfillment of the committed targets.

In respect of new licences issued for provision of Basic Telephone Service as per New Telecom Policy, 99 (NTP-99), the roll-out obligations have been fixed in terms of setting up of Points of Presence (POP) in a Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA). New licensees are to set up POPs in 15% SDCAs in first two years. These two years will be completed between July to October, 2003.