

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:596
ANSWERED ON:17.07.2002
EXPANSION OF NETWORK OF PCO/STD BOOTHS
AMBATI BRAHMANIAH

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any proposals to expand the network of PCO/STD booths;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the additional incentives proposed for youth to continue their operations of PCO/STD booths all over the country;
- (d) whether any discussion has taken place on additional incentives by the Government to retain market share of telephone calls; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI S MAHAJAN)

(a) & (b): Sir, allotment of PCO/STD booths and the consequential expansion of the network is a regular process. According to the present policy, STD PCO booths are allotted liberally to all the eligible applicants on first come first served basis as per their registration. At the places where there is no waiting list for telephones, PCOs are allotted to any extent of the exchange capacity. At all other places 10% of the exchange capacity is utilized for allotment of PCOs. There is no restriction of distance between two PCOs, space and size of the accommodation etc. for opening of new PCOs.

(c) PCO franchisees are paid commission for running the PCOs. They are also allowed to collect service charge, as per rules, from the public. The following additional facilities have also been extended to the franchisees so that more and more people opt for running PCOs:-

- (i) Licence fee on fax machines has been removed.
- (ii) Conference facility on STD PCOs has been allowed.
- (iii) Interest has been allowed on the security deposit made by PCO franchisees to run the PCOs.
- (iv) Additional STD PCOs in the same premises are allotted in the cities/towns where competition from private operators has begun.
- (v) PCO franchisee is also allotted a local Coin Collecting Box (CCB) PCO if he so desires.
- (vi) Payment of PCO bills by cheques has been allowed.
- (vii) Sale of postage stamp and stationery by the PCO franchisees has been permitted.
- (viii) PCO franchisees have been allowed to sell VCC (Virtual Calling Card) cards.