

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3195
ANSWERED ON:14.12.2005
RURAL TELEPHONY OBLIGATIONS
Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji

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

- (a) whether the telecom companies were required to provide rural telephone services by the end of 2002;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether the telephone service providers have achieved the said target;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (f) whether the Government has now set any new deadline for the telephone service providers to fulfil their rural telephony obligations;
- (g) if so, the details thereof; and
- (h) the action taken/proposed to be taken against telephone service providers for their failure to fulfil the rural telephony obligations?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (h) Licence granted to six private Basic Service Operators in 1997-98 stipulated a condition of providing 97806 Village Public Telephones (VPTs) within first three years of effective date of licence. As per information received from private operators, 348 VPTs in Madhya Pradesh, 1314 VPTs in Andhra Pradesh, 1140 VPTs in Maharashtra, 2894 VPTs in Gujarat, 693 VPTs in Rajasthan and 734 VPTs in Punjab were provided by these private operators as on 31.12.2002. Further, licences issued for basic services in 2001 stipulated setting up of Point of Presence in 15% of Short Distance Charging Area within two years of effective date of licence in equal proportion in urban, semi-urban and rural SDCA. This period of two years was not over in 2002. The six private basic operators failed to fulfill their commitments and liquidated damages of Rs. 53.75 crores were recovered for delay in commencement of service and non-provisioning of Direct Exchange Lines and Village Public Telephones. Consequent to announcement of unified Access Service Licence regime in November,2003, all private Basic operators migrated to unified Access Service Licence regime after payment of prescribed entry fee equivalent to 4th cellular service licence and accordingly, the roll out obligations were changed equivalent to that of 4th cellular service licence i.e. coverage of 50% of District Headquarters or any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters within three years. At present, there is no mandatory roll out obligations for private operators in rural areas.