

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:782

ANSWERED ON:03.03.2008

TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS IN VILLAGES

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

- (a) the number of villages in the country where telephone facility has been provided during the last three years, as on date; State-wise;
- (b) the number of villages which are not connected with this facility;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any time-bound programme to provide telephone connections to its waitlisted subscribers;
- (d) if so, the time by which these waitlisted subscribers will be provided telephone connections; and
- (e) the time by which all the villages of the country are likely to be provided with telephone facility?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remaining 66,822 uncovered villages in the country. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. As on 31.01.2008, out of this, 52,484 villages have been provided with VPTs and 14,358 villages are yet to be provided with VPTs. A statement indicating State-wise number of uncovered villages, provided with telephone connections and the number of villages which are yet to be provided with telephone connections is given in the Annexure.

(c) & (d) Adequate landline switching capacity is available for provision of telephone connections on demand in most of the cases. In order to cover technically non-feasible areas, `umbrella coverage` is being provided using Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) technology which would further ensure provisioning of telephone connections to most of the areas on demand. Most of the present waiting list is likely to be cleared progressively by December, 2008.

(e) The remaining 14,358 eligible uncovered villages are likely to be provided with VPTs facility by June, 2008.