

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1739
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2010
TELEPHONE AND POSTAL SERVICES
Khan Shri Hassan

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

- (a) whether the telephone and postal services in the hilly areas of the country especially in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir are unsatisfactory;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve telecom and postal services in the said areas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT)

(a) & (b) Madam, the telephone services provided by BSNL in hilly areas of the country including the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir State are satisfactory. The hilly areas of the country comprise of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, NE-I and NE-II Telecom Circles.

The Ladakh Region of Jammu and Kashmir State gets cut off via road for about six months i.e from November to April. During this period, telephone communication assumes very high importance.

The following steps have been taken to improve and extend communication network in the area:

(i) Ladakh Region is connected to Srinagar on Optical Fibre (OF) Cable of about 400 Kms length which passes through Jijila pass which remains snow covered during winter. The OF cable in this area which gets damaged due to road clearing operation from snow has been upgraded in the last Summer season.

(i) In addition, Ladakh Region is connected to Jammu via Satellite media where bandwidth is limited.

(ii) BSNL has installed a Mobile MSC at Leh with which the requirement of bandwidth for mobile calls have been reduced and thus communication in the Region can continue even in case of interruption of OF cable.

(iii) Telecom service has been provided in remote villages and hamlets through Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPT). Uptil now, 113 such DSPTs had been commissioned in Ladakh Region.

In so far as status of postal services in Jammu and Kashmir Circle is concerned, the services are satisfactory. There are relaxed norms for opening of post offices in hilly areas of the country. 15 Departmental Post Offices and 93 Extra Departmental Post Offices are catering to the postal needs of the public of Ladakh region.

(c) The steps taken by BSNL for the development for telecom service for 2009-10 and 2010-11 in these Telecom Circles is given below.

Sl. No.	Name of Circle	Expansion plan WLL network	Expansion plan GSM network
		(radio capacity)	(radio capacity)
		2009-10	2010-11

1	Assam	49,500	0	260,000	286,000
2	Himachal Pradesh	39,000	0	172,000	189,200
3	Jammu & Kashmir	26,250	0	214,000	235,400
4	NE-I	19,750	0	94,000	103,400
5	NE-II	33,250	0	114,000	125,400
6	Uttarakhand	36,750	0	314,000	345,400

The development plan for 2009-10 and 2010-11 of Ladakh region is given in the Annexure.

Improving the quality of services is an ongoing exercise. These include, introduction of value added services, sustained efforts to improve mail transmission and delivery, pick up mail services etc. Further upgradation of the quality of postal service has been undertaken under "Project Arrow" in Leh Head Post Office.