

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2520

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2010

TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS

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

- (a) whether the Government has fixed any target to provide telephone and mobile connections in rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any strategy to review the undertaken works alongwith the timely completion of it; and
- (d) the extent to which the scheme has been implemented in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) & (b) Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12), inter-alia, provides for achieving a target of 200 million rural telephone connections by 2012.

(c) Yes, Madam. As on 30.06.2010, about 219.8 million rural connections have been provided.

(d) The status of the schemes being implemented with the subsidy support of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is given below:-

(i) Provision of Village Public Telephone (VPT) facility

USOF is providing subsidy support for provision of VPT facility in all the remaining inhabited villages as per Census 2001 irrespective of criteria of population, remoteness, accessibility and law and order situation. As on 30.06.2010, about 5.69 lakh villages out of the 5.93 lakh inhabited villages have been provided with VPT facility. The remaining villages will be provided with VPT facility by February, 2011.

(ii) Subsidy support for setting up of Shareable Infrastructure Sites

Subsidy support is also being extended for setting up of 7387 Shareable Infrastructure Sites in the country for provision of mobile services in rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. As on 30.06.2010, 7183 towers have already been provided under this scheme.

(iii) Individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs)

USOF was providing Subsidy support for installation of Individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country, where cost of providing telephones is more than the revenue earned. The cut off date for installation of these RDELs expired on 31.03.2010. As on 31.03.2010, 79.3 lakh RDELs have been provided under this scheme.