

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1943

ANSWERED ON:22.11.2010

EXPANSION OF TELEPHONE SERVICES

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

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to connect all the villages with Telephone and Broadband Internet services in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the survey conducted in this regard, if any;
- (c) whether there is any scheme to include Telecom Companies of private sector in providing said telecom services in rural areas;
- (d) if not, the details of the amount paid by the Telecom Companies in private sector as penalty for not investing in rural areas;
- (e) whether there is any scheme to spend money from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to provide telecom network in rural areas of the country; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has formulated various schemes to connect all the villages with Telephone and Broadband Internet services in the country. The details of various USOF Schemes are given in the Annexure.

(c) & (d) The works in respect of USOF schemes have been awarded to BSNL and various private service providers and infrastructure providers alike through open bidding process. So far as penalty on Private Telecom Companies for not providing telecom services in rural areas is concerned, it may be mentioned that provision of telecom facilities in rural areas are not covered under CMTS/UAS License, which only stipulates that in Metros, 90% of the service area shall be covered within one year of the effective date. In Telecom Circles, at least 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQ) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the District Headquarters will be covered within three years of effective date of licence. The licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters. Coverage of a DHQ/town would mean that at least 90% of the area bounded by the Municipal limits would get the required street as well as in-building coverage. The District Headquarters shall be taken as on the effective date of Licence. The choice of the District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/town shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision. There is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas.

(e) & (f) Yes, Madam. USOF has formulated various schemes to provide telecom network in rural areas of the country. The details of various USOF Schemes already given in the Annexure.

Further, BSNL is having following agreements with USOF DoT for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) and wire-line broadband connectivity in rural & remote areas.

i) Bharat Nirman VPT Agreement: BSNL has entered into an agreement with USOF with a target to provide 62,302 (revised) Village Public Telephones (VPT) under Bharat Nirman in the country out of which 61,850 VPTs have been provided upto 30.9.2010. Remote villages having no terrestrial coverage are being covered with VPT facility by using DSPTs (Digital Satellite Phone Terminal).

ii) New VPT Agreement: BSNL has entered into another agreement with USOF in February 2009 with a target to provide 62,443 VPTs in the country in uncovered inhabited villages as per census 2001 out of which 43,526 villages have been covered with VPT facility upto 30.9.2010 including 3425 VPTs provided by Private Basic Service Operators (BPSO).

iii) Wireline Broadband Agreement: BSNL has signed an agreement with USOF on 20.1.2009 for subsidy disbursement towards provision of wire-line broadband connectivity in rural & remote areas from existing rural & remote telephone exchanges, already in operation in all the service areas except Delhi & Mumbai metro areas. In total 28,762 rural exchanges will cover approx. One lakh villages in this project. Till September 2010, BSNL has acquired a customer base of 21,0902 in these identified rural and remote areas.

