

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:303

ANSWERED ON:23.02.2011

TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS

Dashmuni Deepa ;Nagar Shri Surendra Singh;Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati;Sugumar Shri K.

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

- (a) the details of the mobile subscribers as on date separately in rural and urban areas, company-wise including Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL);
- (b) the steps taken by MTNL and BSNL to face the competition from private players;
- (c) whether some regions in the country are yet to be connected with mobile telephone facility;
- (d) if so, the details of such regions alongwith the action taken by the Government to provide mobile connectivity to these regions; and
- (e) the funds earmarked and spent on extending telecom facilities to these areas and role played/likely to be played by private players in this regard?

Answer

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

- (a) The details of mobile subscribers as on 31.12.2010 in rural and urban areas, company-wise including Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited(MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited(BSNL) are given in Annexure-I.
- (b) Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) are taking following steps to face the competition from private players:-
 - (i) Improving Customer Care Services;
 - (ii) Provision of Value Added Services;
 - (iii) Competitive tariffs; and
 - (iv) Expansion of network.
- (c) & (d) For provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas where there was no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage and for covering villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage, Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has launched a scheme to provide financial support for setting up and managing 7363 number of infrastructure sites/towers (revised from 7871) in 500 districts spread over 27 States.

The agreements effective from 01.06.2007 were signed with the successful bidders in May 2007. As on 31.01.2011, 7251 towers i.e. about 98.48% have been set up under this scheme. The infrastructure so created is being shared by three service providers (including private service providers) for provision of mobile services. As on 31.12.2010, 13866 Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) have been commissioned by Service Providers and mobile services are being provided.
- (e) About Rs.508/- Crore has been earmarked for the above mentioned USOF scheme. As on 31.12.2010, Rs.118.86/- Crore has been spent by USOF on account of financial support to Infrastructure Providers (IPs)/Universal Service Providers (USPs) who are implementing the above mentioned USOF scheme. The telecom operator(s), for implementing the scheme with financial support from USOF, have been selected through an open bidding process in which eligible private operators also participated. The private telecom operators, as given in Annexure-II, are also involved in implementation of this USOF scheme.