

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2218
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2011
GSM COVERAGE TO VILLAGES
Dubey Shri Nishikant ;Thamaraiselvan Shri R.

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

- (a) whether there is substantial increase of GSM telephone subscribers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and current year, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to provide GSM coverage to the villages;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and criteria adopted for the purpose; and
- (e) the timeframe set up to cover the selected villages?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. There has been continuous increase in the number of GSM telephone connections in the country. The number of GSM telephone connections in the country which were 192.69 million as on 31.03.2008, now stands at 564.09 million as on 31.01.2011. The service area-wise detail for the last three years and current year is given in the Annexure.

(c) to (e) Yes, Madam. As on 31.01.2011 Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has covered 390552 villages out of 610885 villages with mobile coverage in its area of operation. Further, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited plans to expand the mobile service coverage to the villages having population more than 1000 progressively in next three years subject to techno-commercial feasibility.

A scheme has been launched by USO Fund to provide subsidy support for setting up and managing 7363 number of infrastructure sites/ towers (revised from 7871) in 500 districts spread over 27 States, for provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas, where there was no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. As on 31.01.2011, 7251 towers i.e. about 98.48% towers have been set up under this scheme. The infrastructure so created is being shared by three 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.