

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:313

ANSWERED ON:24.08.2011

MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS

Pakkirappa Shri S.;Reddy Shri Modugula Venugopala

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

- (a) whether there has been a significant increase in the number of mobile subscribers in the country during the last three years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof separately for rural and urban areas, State-wise;
- (c) whether some private telecom service providers are not fulfilling their social obligation for providing their services in the rural and remote areas of the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken by the Government thereon;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to ensure mobile connectivity in every part of the country, including the hilly, tribal and naxal affected areas; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 313 FOR 24TH AUGUST, 2011 REGARDING "MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS"

(a) Yes, Madam.

(b) The details of number of wireless telephone connections in rural and urban areas, State-wise, in the country during the last three years and as on 30.6.2011 are given in the Annexure.

(c) & (d) The Universal Access Service Licence (UASL) Agreement condition relating to coverage criteria in a service area inter-alia states that:

Applicable for Category "A", "B" and "C" Service Area Licence(s)

LICENSEE shall ensure that

(i) Atleast 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the DHQs will be covered within three years of effective date of Licence.

(ii) The licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the DHQs.

(iii) Coverage of a DHQ/town would mean that at least 90% of the area bounded by the Municipal limits should get the required street as well as in-building coverage.

(iv) The DHQs shall be taken as on the effective date of Licence.

(v) The choice of DHQs/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% DHQs/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision.

(vi) There is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural area.

There has been delay in provisioning of mobile services by some Universal Service Providers (USPs) namely Bharti Airtel, Aircel, Vodafone, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Idea & Reliance in rural & remote areas under Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

Fines have been imposed on some companies for the period of interruption in mobile services due to shutting down of services by those companies as per the provisions contained in clause 2.4 of Section-VII of the USOF agreement with them.

Clause 2.4 provides that "No penalty shall be payable in case of interruption of mobile services for a period of up to 7 days in a quarter. Penalty @ Rs.500/- per day shall be payable if there is interruption in services for more than 7 days in a quarter. However, if there is interruption in services for 45 days or more in a quarter, penalty shall be payable for the whole quarter".

The Department regularly reviews the scheme at field level through Controllers of Communication Accounts of Department of Telecommunications and at Headquarter level by the Administrator, USO Fund for expediting the commissioning of pending Base Transceiver Stations (BTs). Additionally, the Department has also constituted a High Level Committee to consider all aspects of the issue and suggest appropriate further action, if necessary, under the UAS Licence conditions.

(e)&(f) Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme of USO Fund provides for subsidy support for setting up and managing 7353 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 is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. Villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage were taken into consideration for installation of the tower under this scheme including hilly, tribal & naxal affected areas. The agreements effective from 01.06.2007 were signed with the successful bidders in May 2007. Out of 7353 number of towers, 7289 towers i.e. about 99.13% have been set up as on 31.07.2011 under this scheme. The infrastructure so created is sharable by three service providers for provision of mobile services. As on 31.07.2011, 15469 BTs have been commissioned by Service Providers to provide mobile services.