

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:327

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MOBILE TELEPHONE FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS

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

- (a) whether the Government has fixed any target for diffusion of mobile telephone in rural and urban areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard, State-wise;
- (c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the MTNL and BSNL to compete with the private players in increasing their show base in providing better service to customers;
- (d) whether BSNL & MTNL proposes to install more mobile towers particularly in remote and rural areas for better penetration;
- (e) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (f) the action taken by the Government to make the non-functional mobile towers functional?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA)

(a) Under the Draft National Telecom Policy 2012, it is proposed to increase rural teledensity from current level of around 37 to 60 by 2017 and 100 by the year 2020.

(b) A scheme has been launched by Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF) to provide subsidy support for setting up and managing 7353 infrastructure sites/towers 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 31.01.2012, 7296 towers have been set up under the scheme. The infrastructure so created is being shared by upto three service providers for provision of mobile services.

(c) Following steps are being taken by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to increase the show base:

- (i) increase number of franchisees/Retailers.
- (ii) implementing agreement with postal department to increase rural reach.
- (iii) availability of products in organized retail stores, malls, neighborhood markets etc.
- (iv) improving availability of network.
- (v) speedy redressal of complaints through call centres.

Steps taken/proposed to be taken by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) to increase the show base:

- (i) MTNL will be increasing its broadband & Globule System for Mobile communication (GSM)/3G capacity to cater to the demand for providing futuristic services.
- (ii) expansion/augmentation of existing 3G network to HSPA+ to provide high speed internet and high quality video and other bandwidth demanding services.
- (iii) MTNL is also expanding 2G/3G RF networks which will further improve network coverage and service experience.
- (iv) introduction of new technology for decongestion/efficient utilization of radio frequency spectrum.
- (v) MTNL is also bundling its services with data cards and handsets from various vendors.
- (vi) close monitoring of faults is being maintained. Emphasis has been given on the improvement of the quality of service.

(d) to (f) MTNL operates in Delhi and Mumbai only. BSNL undertakes the installation of towers on a continuous basis, based on techno-commercial consideration. Further BSNL has already initiated and action for procurement of the Global System for Mobile (GSM) communication equipment for future expansion.