

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4321

ANSWERED ON:02.05.2012

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY TO VILLAGES

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

- (a) the details of villages connected with mobile connectivity so far, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to connect all villages including the villages in remote, hilly and naxal affected areas;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the action plan prepared by the Government in this regard and the timeframe fixed for connecting all villages with mobile connectivity;
- (d) the funds earmarked by the Government for providing mobile facilities to all the villages in the country;
- (e) whether the Government has chalked out alternative plan to provide telephone connectivity to those villages where Village Public Telephone (VPT) facilities are not feasible; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

Answer

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

- (a): The details of villages covered by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) with cellular mobile services are given in Annexure.
- (b) & (c): Yes madam.
- (i) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) schemes are planned from time to time to extend financial support for provisioning of mobile communication services in uncovered villages of the country in a phased manner.
- (ii) A scheme namely Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme has been launched by USO Fund to provide subsidy support for setting up and managing 7,353 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. 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. The agreements effective from 01.06.2007 were signed with the successful bidders in May 2007. As on 31.03.2012, 7,306 towers i.e. about 99.35% have been set up under this scheme. As on 31.03.2012, 15,720 BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) have been commissioned by Service Providers for provisioning of mobile services.
- (iii) Ministry of Home Affairs has identified and conveyed to the Department of Telecommunications 2199 locations in 9 states which are affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and do not currently have any coverage by any service provider. These locations have been identified for installing towers and mobile equipment keeping in view the security and maintenance considerations. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has already installed towers at 363 locations. It has been decided to seek approval of the Cabinet to extend USOF subsidy support to BSNL on nomination basis, for providing & managing Mobile Services in these Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas.
- (d): Earmarking of the fund i.e. subsidy to be disbursed from USOF for particular scheme is decided as per the agreement(s) signed with the implementing agency. At present, agreements for implementation of Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme have been signed by USOF in year 2007 for provisioning of mobile services in specified rural & remote areas of the country and estimated cost (subsidy) for the scheme is Rs. 588 Crore.
- (e) & (f): As on 31.03.2012, 5,80,556 villages i.e. 97.8% of the Census 2001 inhabited revenue villages have been covered with Village Public Telephone (VPT) facility. VPTs are likely to be provided in remaining inhabited revenue villages by August 2012. VPTs are being provided on DSPTs (Digital Satellite Phone Terminals) in those villages where provisioning of VPT on other wire-line or wireless technology is not feasible.