

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4121

ANSWERED ON:05.09.2012

EXPANSION OF TELECOM 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 implemented the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)'s recommendations of October, 2005 for expansion of telecom services in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made by the Government in providing telephone facilities both landline and mobile in rural, tribal and hilly villages, State-wise;
- (c) the State-wise details of the villages yet to be provided with telephone connectivity separately with landline or mobile in the country and the reasons therefor;
- (d) the time frame fixed by the Government to connect these villages with telecom facilities and the action plan prepared for the same;
- (e) whether the private telecom operators are reluctant in rolling out or delaying to roll out their mobile services under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and are not installing mobile towers in rural areas; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof, operatorwise and the action including penal action taken by the Government against the erring operators, operator-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI MILIND DEORA)

(a) & (b) The details of the action taken and the current status, inter alia, of the decisions of Department of Telecommunications on the Recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on 'Growth of Telecom Services in Rural India -The Way Forward' October 3, 2005 are at Annexure-I.

The details of rural mobile and landline telephones, as on 30.06.2012, service areawise are given in Annexure-II. The details of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), as on 31.07.2012, are given in Annexure-III.

(c) & (d) The details of villages yet to be provided with VPTs by BSNL, as on 31.07.2012, are given in Annexure-IV. About 37,000 villages in the country are yet to be connected with mobile connectivity as per the analysis carried out by CDOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) [the technical consultant of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)] based on the WPC (Wireless Planning & Coordination Cell) data of March'2011. The State-wise details of villages yet to be provided with mobile telephone connectivity are given in Annexure-V. BSNL has planned to provide connectivity to uncovered villages through Digital Satellite Phone Terminal (DSPT) technology and the technically feasible villages are expected to be provided with VPT facility by 31.03.2013. As per the National Telecom Policy 2012, approved by the Government on 31.05.2012, it is proposed to increase rural teledensity from current level of around 39 to 70 by the year 2017 and 100 by the year 2020.

(e) & (f) There have been delays in provisioning of mobile services by Universal Service Providers (USPs) under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme of USOF. Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme was 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 31.07.2012, 7,307 towers i.e. about 99.37% have been set up under this scheme. The infrastructure so created is to be shared by three service providers for provision of mobile services. As on 30.06.2012, 15,748 BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) have been commissioned by Service Providers for provisioning of mobile services.

As per clause 5.2 of Section-VI: Operating Conditions of the Agreements signed with USPs, the USP should provide the mobile services from each of the Mobile Services Sites within two months of the commissioning of the Infrastructure Site by the IP. Some USPs are not commissioning the BTSs within the prescribed rollout period i.e. within the two months period of commissioning of the

infrastructure site and the pace of BTS installation by USPs is slow. The status, as on 30th June 2012, in this respect is given in Annexure VI. Liquidated Damages (LD) are being imposed on the defaulting USPs for delay in provisioning of mobile services as per the provisions of the agreement signed with them. Detail of LD recovered is given in Annexure-VII.

Further, A Committee has also been set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Telecom) to consider all aspects of delay in rollout of mobile services under Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme of USOF and suggest appropriate action that may be required to be taken in the facts and circumstances of the case. The Committee has submitted its report dated 02.11.2011 and the same is under examination.