

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1661
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2012
EXPANSION OF TELEPHONE NETWORK
Chitthan Shri N.S.V.

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

- (a) whether the Government has set up 81 clusters for expansion of telephone network in rural areas in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the average number of villages covered in these clusters, State-wise; and
- (d) the time by which the telephone facility is proposed to be set up in all these villages/village clusters?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme was launched by Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund in year 2007 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 of the country divided in 81 clusters for bidding purpose, for provision of mobile services 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 being 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.

(d) Rollout for provisioning of mobile services under the scheme was to be completed by October 2011 but Universal Service Providers could commission 15,748 BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) out of the targeted 22,059 BTSs for provisioning of mobile services till on 30.06.2012. There have been delays in provisioning of mobile services by Universal Service Providers (USPs) under the scheme. A Committee has been set up by Hon'ble MOC&IT on 15.07.2011 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.