

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:365
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2012
GROWTH OF LANDLINE TELEPHONES
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the growth rate of landline telephone subscribers of BSNL and MTNL has gone down in the past few years particularly in the rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the quality of services rendered by these PSUs to the customers is resulting in surrender of a large number of landline telephone connections;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has conducted any study to ascertain the reasons for the poor landline service of these PSUs to the customers and if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken by the Government to address the issue?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) to (e) 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 (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 365 FOR 19TH DECEMBER, 2012 REGARDING "GROWTH OF LANDLINE TELEPHONES"

(a) & (b) Landline telephone subscriber base of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), including rural subscribers, and of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has decreased in the past few years. The details are as follows:-

Landline telephone subscribers
(in million)

| | BSNL | MTNL | Total |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| 31-03-2010 | 27.83 | 9.76 | 3.50 |
| 31-03-2011 | 25.22 | 8.64 | 3.46 |
| 31-03-2012 | 22.47 | 7.49 | 3.46 |
| 30-09-2012 | 21.36 | 7.04 | 3.45 |

The main reasons for decrease in number of landline telephone subscribers in BSNL & MTNL are as follows:-

Substitution of fixed line telephone connections by personal mobile phones

Stiff Competition from private operators.

Surrender of extra wireline telephone connections where multiple telephone connections existed in same house/office premises.

Lack of effective marketing

Poor customer service

(c) to (e) TRAI regularly monitors the performance of basic telephone service (wireline) providers against the benchmarks for the various quality of service parameters laid down in its Standards of Quality of Service(QoS) of Basic Telephone Service (wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009 through Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMR).

In the case of BSNL, non-compliance with the benchmarks has been observed mostly in respect of some parameters viz. percentage faults repaired within three days for urban areas; percentage faults repaired within five days for rural areas; fault incidences per 100 subscribers/ month; percentage faults repaired by next working day; accessibility of call centre/ customer care; percentage of calls answered by the operator (within 60 seconds) and percentage requests for termination/ closure of service complied within seven days.

In the case of MTNL, non-compliance with the benchmarks has been observed in respect of some parameters viz. fault incidences per 100 subscribers/ month; percentage faults repaired within three days and percentage requests for termination/ closure of service complied within seven days both in Delhi and Mumbai service areas, in addition, non-compliance has been observed in respect of percentage faults repaired by next working day; resolution of billing/charging complaints in Delhi service area and mean time to repair in Mumbai service area.

TRAI has directed BSNL and MTNL to improve their performance with respect to the parameters where performance is below the benchmarks.

In order to ensure compliance with the benchmarks and for improving performance, TRAI has recently issued The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (second Amendment) Regulations, 2012, which provide for financial disincentive not exceeding Rs.50,000/- per parameter for not meeting the benchmarks for Basic Service.

Steps taken by BSNL and MTNL for improving the QoS of landline services are as follows:

BSNL

Rehabilitation and up gradation of external plant including wall mounted Distribution points.

Introduction of Call Detail Record (CDR) based billing, commercial, and fault repair service and work order management system.

Introduction of effective Network Management System.

Fault Repair Service of rural exchanges has been centralized at Short Distance Charging Area Hq and is migrated to Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) based system.

Organization of open house/Telephone Adalat.

Strengthening of sales and distribution channel of landline and broadband connections including launch of Udaan scheme to provide service at door steps.

Continuous improvement in customer care is being done through project Smile. Around 4000 Customer Service Centre (CSCs) are being upgraded with single window clearance concept and Information Technology (IT) enabled changed business processes.

Monitoring of Quality of Service (QoS) parameters to adhere to the benchmarks stipulated by TRAI.

Introduction of various attractive tariff plans & improved marketing strategies.

BSNL has made all out efforts to retain landline customers and increase services by providing several Value Added Services including broadband services, Intelligent Network Services and broadband based value added services like Video/ Games/Music on demand etc

Efforts are being made to extend connectivity to new upcoming colonies to provide landline telephones on demand.

All rural telephone exchanges have been provided with Broadband and internet services.

Broadband kiosks have also been opened in all SDCAs to provide internet service to rural community.

MTNL

Launch of attractive Tariff Plans for its Value Added services at most affordable rates.

Better customer care by operating more user friendly Sanchar Haats & Customer Service Centres (CSCs) at strategic locations.

Opening of Helpline/Call Centre for booking of new connections and fault rectification.

Staff is being trained to handle the complaints promptly and effectively.

The launching of promotional plans with waivers from time to time.

Separate Sales Units have been formed to visit the retailers/distributors for undertaking door to door visit.

Holding of Open House Session and Adalats to address grievances of the customers.

Enhancement of speed of Broadband services in various unlimited plans has been implemented, resulting in retention of landline subscribers.

Patrolling is being done to avoid cable theft.

Routine inspection of subs premises and maintenance of subs fitting is being done.

Upgradation of external plants.