

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1389

ANSWERED ON:06.03.2013

TELECOM SERVICE IN RURAL AREAS

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

- (a) the national teledensity in the country along with the State-wise teledensity separately in rural and urban areas;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to achieve 100 percent rural teledensity;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government to provide adequate infrastructure for the same;
- (d) whether the private telecom operators are not rolling out their service in rural areas;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against such operators along with the steps taken to encourage them to enter in rural areas;
- (f) whether the Government is promoting the use of renewable energy in telecom sector; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard so far?

Answer

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

(a) The national teledensity in the country along with the Service area/State-wise teledensity separately in rural and urban areas are given in Annexure-I.

(b) & (c) Increasing rural teledensity to 70 percent by the year 2017 and 100 percent by the year 2020 is one of the stated objectives of National Telecom Policy 2012.

The Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has been established w.e.f. 01.04.2002 by an Act of Parliament with the fundamental objective of providing access to all types of telecom services including mobile services, broadband connectivity and creation of infrastructure like OFC (Optical Fiber Cable) in rural and remote areas. The resources for USOF are raised through a Universal Service Levy (USL), which is 5% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of all Telecom Service Providers except the pure value added service providers like Internet, Voice Mail, E-Mail service providers etc.

Various USOF funded scheme are contributing significantly in increasing the rural tele-density. Details of schemes being implemented with financial support from USOF for providing telecom services/infrastructure in rural & remote areas are given in Annexure-II.

(d) & (e) The Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/ Unified Access Service (UAS) License condition mandate DHQ (District Headquarter) based roll out obligations. The terms and conditions of the license inter-alia provide that:

(i) The choice of DHQs/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% of DHQs/towns shall lie with the operator.

(ii) There is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas.

There are separate conditions for roll out of network utilising the 3G/BWA spectrum allotted through auction process. After auction of 3G/BWA spectrum, the CMTS/ UAS Licences of the respective successful bidders have been amended.

As per amendment in the CMTS/ UAS Licences issued to successful bidders in the 3G / BWA spectrum auction, Roll out obligations inter-alia provides that:

(a) The Licensee shall ensure compliance of following network roll out obligations for 3G spectrum for respective category of the licensed service area(s).

For category A, B & C service areas Licence(s): The Licensee to whom the spectrum is assigned shall ensure that at least 50% of the DHQ in the service area will be covered using the 3G Spectrum, out of which at least 15% of the DHQs should be rural Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCA), within five years of the Effective date. SDCA is defined as per the definition used by the Census of India.

Rural SDCA is defined as an area where 50% of the population lives in the rural areas.

(b) The Licensee shall ensure compliance of following network roll-out obligations for BWA Spectrum for respective category of the licensed service area(s).

For category A, B, & C service areas Licence(s). The Licensee to whom the spectrum is assigned shall ensure that at least 50% of the rural short distance charging area (SDCA) is covered within five years of the Effective Date using the BWA Spectrum. Coverage of a rural SDCA would mean that at least 90% of the area bounded by the municipal/local body limits should get the required street level coverage.

The Effective Date shall be the date when the right to use awarded spectrum commercially commences i.e. the date of issue of the amendment letter to respective 3G/BWA successful bidder.

The five year period of the 3G/BWA spectrum licensees would be completed in the year 2015.

(f) & (g) Yes Madam, the Government is promoting the use of renewable energy in telecom sector.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommendations on Green Energy applications have been approved by Government. Following directives have been issued to the licensees/all ILD service providers to adopt measures to green the Telecom sector setting broad directions & goals:

i. At least 50% of all rural towers and 20% of the urban towers are to be powered by hybrid power (Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) + Grid Power) by 2015, while 75% of rural towers and 33% of urban towers are to be powered by hybrid power by 2020.

ii. All service providers are required to evolve a carbon credit policy in line with carbon credit norms with an ultimate objective of achieving a maximum of 50% over the carbon footprint levels of the base year in rural areas and achieving a 66% over the carbon footprint levels of the base year in urban areas by the year 2020. The base year for calculating all existing carbon foot prints would be 2011, with an implementation period of one year and the first year of carbon reduction would be the year 2012.

iii. All service providers to declare the carbon foot prints of their network twice in a year. Further based on the details of footprints declared by all service providers, service providers should aim at carbon emission reduction targets for the mobile network at 5% by the year 2012-2013, 8% by the year 2014-15, 12% by the year 2016-17 and 17% by the year 2018-2019.