

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2613

ANSWERED ON:13.03.2013

TELECOM SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

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

- (a) whether the target fixed for expansion of telecom services under the 11th Five Year Plan could not be achieved, both in urban and rural areas in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor particularly in rural areas, State/UT-wise along with the funds allocated and spent during the said period;
- (c) the action plan formulated and the funds allocated by the Government for expansion of telecom services in rural, backward and tribal areas along with the target fixed for 12th Five Year Plan, State-wise;
- (d) the details of villages connected and those yet to be connected with telephones separately with landline and mobile telephones as on date, State/UT-wise;
- (e) whether the Government has signed/ proposes to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre for Development of Telemetric for providing technical consultancy to provide telecom services in uncovered villages; and
- (f) if so, the detail thereof and the action taken to facilitate all the villages in the country both with landline and mobile telephones?

Answer

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

(a) The target fixed for expansion of telecom services under the 11th Five Year Plan has been achieved both in urban and rural areas in the country.

A statement indicating the overall targets fixed and achievements made as on 31.03.2012 is given below:

Target at the end of	Achievement as on
Eleventh Five Year Plan	31st March, 2012
Total Subscribers Numbers	600 million 951.34 million
Rural Subscribers Numbers	200 million 330.82 million
Rural Tele-density	25% 39.26%

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) One of the stated objectives of National Telecom Policy 2012 is to increase rural teledensity from the current level of around 39 percent to 70 percent by 2017.

National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project is planned to connect all the 2,50,000 Gram panchayats in the country through optical fibre utilizing existing fibers of PSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and Power Grid and laying incremental fiber wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks, for providing broadband connectivity. The project will be funded by USOF and initial estimated cost of project is Rs.20,000 Crore in 2 years. The network thus created will be supplemented by appropriate technology to ensure a bandwidth of at least 100 Mbps at each Gram Panchayat. Non-discriminatory access to the network will be provided to all categories of service providers. These access providers/ service providers like mobile operators, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), cable TV operators, content providers can launch various services in rural areas. Various applications for e-health, e-education, e-governance etc. will be provided. The project is being executed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) namely Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL), which has been incorporated on 25.02.2012 under Indian Companies Act 1956.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has identified 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. BSNL has already installed Mobile Towers at 363 locations. Mobile services is envisaged to be made available to general public as well as security personnel around these locations. State-wise detail of these locations is given in Annexure-I.

(d) 5,81,610 villages out of the 5,93,601 [i.e. 97.97%] inhabited revenue villages as per Census 2001 have been covered with Village Public Telephones (VPTs), as on 31.01.2013 with subsidy support from USOF. The details of villages where VPTs have been provided and where VPTs are yet to be provided are given in Annexure-II.

About 56,397 villages in the country are yet to be connected with mobile services as per the survey carried out by the Department of Telecommunication. The State-wise details of such villages are given in Annexure-III.

(e)&(f) USOF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) on 1st November, 2012 for preparation of mobile network to be used for benchmarking of USOF subsidy. A scheme would be proposed after receiving the report from C-DoT for extending financial support from USO Fund for provisioning mobile communication services in balance inhabited uncovered villages of the country.

Reconciliation of the Village Public Telephones (VPTs) working in the inhabited villages as per Census 2001 was carried out taking into account the existing VPTs and those provided under Bharat Nirman. Agreement(s) has been signed with BSNL on 27.02.2009 for provisioning of VPT facility in all remaining inhabited uncovered villages as per Census 2001 with subsidy support from USOF. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is to provide VPTs in remaining technically feasible inhabited villages (as per Annexure-II) under the scheme by September 2013.