

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:954
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2013
FREE SERVICES BY NETWORKING SITES
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the foreign operators/ websites like Google and Skype are providing many services at free of cost to users;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the amount of service tax and AGR collected from such foreign operators against the paid subscriptions and services so far;
- (d) whether these foreign entities are violating some rules and regulations in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the action taken/likely to be taken against them?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) Licenses for provision of Telecom Services are issued to Indian companies under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. Unrestricted Internet Telephony Services are permitted under the scope of Unified License with Access Service authorization and Unified Access Service (UAS) License. Similar provisions are there in Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) and Basic Service Licence. Restricted Internet Telephony Services, without connectivity to Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) / Public Land Mobile Network (PLMN) in India, are permitted under the scope of Internet Service Licence.

Services like voice call, chat, messaging, video conferencing etc. offered by certain foreign websites including Google, Skype etc. are available in public domain for free use and may be accessible to users through Internet services provided by Licensed Telecom Operators. Applicable charges for using internet services are accordingly levied on subscribers by the telecom service providers and applicable license fee is paid by the licensed telecom service providers.

Such foreign operators are not under the ambit of Indian licensing and regulatory regime as they are operating at foreign land.

Further, Information Technology Act 2000 has been amended by the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 w.e.f. 27.10.2009, wherein enabling provisions have been made with reference to services being provided using computer resources including provisions for interception, monitoring and blocking for public access of any information through any computer resource.