

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3901

ANSWERED ON:14.12.2009

AMENDMENT IN RULES OF USO FUND

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

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal to amend the Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund rules;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT)

(a) to (c) No, Sir. The existing Rules of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) already have the provisions to provide subsidy support for public telecom and information services in rural and remote areas of the country. These Rules are being amended from time to time to expand the scope of rural telecom connectivity.

Last such amendments were carried out in 17.11.2006 and 18.7.2008 to enable support for mobile services & broadband connectivity in rural & remote areas and for providing subsidy support to eligible operators for operational sustainability of Rural wire line Household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) installed prior to 01-04-2002.

Various schemes being undertaken/considered for expansion of telecom network in rural and remote areas are provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the uncovered villages, replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based VPTs, support for RDELs, setting up of shared mobile towers, provision of wire line/wireless broadband connectivity in rural areas, creation of general infrastructure in rural areas etc.