

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1688

ANSWERED ON:03.12.2014

UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND .

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

- (a) total fund collected and disbursed under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) during the last three years and the current year, company-wise;
- (b) the amount of fund utilised to provide telecom services in rural and remote areas and the number of villages provided with broadband internet mobile telephony services and connected with National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN), State-wise;
- (c) whether any private operator has violated the scheme to provide connectivity in remote areas;
- (d) if so, the action taken by the Union Government against such mobile telephone operators; and
- (e) whether the Central Government has reduced the penalty imposed on private telecom operators to just Rs. 5 crore in 2011 and if so, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

- (a) Total fund collected and disbursed under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) during the last three years and the current year is as under:

Financial Year	Universal Access Levy (UAL) collections	Funds allocated and disbursed
(Booked figures as per Department of Telecommunications Accounts)		
[in Rs. Crore]		
2011-12	6723.57	1687.96
2012-13	6735.46	625.00
2013-14	7896.39	2163.45
2014-15	1869.68	1769.13
[Till September 2014]		[Till October 2014]
Total	23225.10	6245.54

Company-wise details of subsidy disbursed by USOF during the last three years and the current year are given in Annexure-I.

- (b) Total amount of Rs. 2010 Crore has been utilized from the fund under National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) to provide telecom services in rural and remote areas of India. The project is being implemented by 3 Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) viz. BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited), Railtel and PGCIL (Power Grid Corporation of India Limited) and they have been assigned various States/Union Territories wherein the project has to be implemented by them. The project is being implemented in a composite manner by the CPSUs. Therefore, state-wise information on release and utilization is not being maintained by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL).

Work is underway by BBNL and 3 CPSUs to connect about 50,000 Gram Panchayats with Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by March 2015 to facilitate leveraging telecom services.

- (c) There have been delays by telecom companies in implementing the USOF schemes. The Government imposed Liquidated Damages (LD) for delays in roll-out as per terms and conditions of the agreements signed by the executing entities with USOF.

M/s Reliance Communications Limited and M/s Reliance Telecom Limited switched off their mobile Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) at 1191 and 228 installed under Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme of USOF respectively causing interruption of mobile services in concerned areas during November 2010 to February 2011.

- (d) An amount of Rs. 1.72 crores towards Liquidated Damages (LD) has been recovered from telecom companies [Universal Service Providers (USP) and Infrastructure Providers (IP)] implementing the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme with the support of USOF, for delays in roll-out.

A financial penalty of Rs. 4,63,22,000 has been imposed on M/s Reliance Communications Limited and Rs. 1,07,67,500 on M/s Reliance Telecom Limited for the period of interruption in mobile service caused due to shutting down of services by these companies.

(e) No, Madam. The Government has not reduced the penalty imposed on any private telecom operator implementing the said scheme. Penalty has been imposed as per the provisions of the agreement signed by USOF with these entities.