

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2449

ANSWERED ON:11.03.2015

UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND

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

- (a) the aims and objectives of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) Scheme;
- (b) the progress made in this regard so far along with the funds collected and disbursed under the scheme along with the villages provided with telecom facility as a result thereof, operator and State-wise;
- (c) whether the mobile phones and tablets are proposed to be provided to the poor under the USOF;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and whether the Government proposes to link the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with the scheme; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the opinion of NITI Ayog thereon?

Answer

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

(a) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) was established w.e.f. 1st April 2002 under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act 2003 with the objective of providing financial support to provide basic telegraph services to people in the rural and remote areas. In 2006, the scope was widened to bring all types of telegraph services including mobile services, broadband connectivity and creation of infrastructure like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) in rural and remote areas, under the purview of Universal Service Obligation.

(b) Various schemes are being implemented with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for expansion of telecom services in rural & remote areas of the country. Details of schemes and progress made so far are given at Annexure-I. State-wise data is given at Annexure-II, Annexure-III and Annexure-IV.

Rs. 64163.63 Crore have been collected as Universal Access Levy (UAL) and Rs. 19735.38 Crore have been disbursed till 31.01.2015. In addition, Rs. 6948.64 Crore have been reimbursed to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) towards License Fee and Spectrum charges. The fund disbursed under the USOF schemes is enclosed operator-wise at Annexure-V. The fund disbursed from USOF is enclosed state-wise at Annexure-VI.

(c) There is no such proposal under consideration, at present.

(d) & (e) Not applicable, in view of (c) of above.