

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:375

ANSWERED ON:22.07.2015

Telecom Services in Rural Areas

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

- (a) whether telephone connectivity, landline and mobile in rural/backward/hilly areas in the country are not satisfactory;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of villages connected and those yet to be connected with landline and mobile telephones separately, as well as the number of mobile towers installed and activated in these areas along with funds spent for the purpose, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to provide telephone connectivity in all the villages across the country by the 2017;
- (d) if so, the details thereof indicating the targets fixed and achieved so far during the current Five Year Plan, State-wise including the steps taken/being taken by the Government to achieve the target; and
- (e) whether the funds allocated for expansion and improvement of telecom facilities in rural/backward/hilly region during the current Plan have been utilized fully and properly, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor and the remedial action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) It is Government's endeavour to provide satisfactory telecom services in all parts of the country including rural, backward & hilly areas. Poor quality of electricity supply, frequent cable cuts, difficulties in maintenance are some of the reasons affecting the quality of service in hilly, remote and rural areas. Non payment by custodian for use of Village Public Telephone is also a reason for curtailment of services.

The details of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) and Mobile coverage in villages are as below:

Village Public Telephones: As on 31.05.2015, 5,81,183 out of the 5,93,601 inhabited villages [i.e. 97.9%] of the country as per Census 2001 have been covered with Village Public Telephones (VPTs). State/Circle-wise details is given at Annexure-I.

Mobile Connectivity: It is estimated that there are about 55,669 villages in the country that do not have mobile coverage. State-wise list of uncovered villages is given at Annexure-II.

Service providers install mobile towers at different locations based on economic viability. In addition Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) supports establishment of towers in rural and remote areas through the levy collected from service providers.

Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme: 7317 Mobile towers have been installed with the financial support of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme in villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage. The infrastructure so created is capable of being shared by three service providers for provision of mobile services. 16,254 BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) have been commissioned by Service Providers at these towers for provisioning of mobile services. The scheme was implemented during the period from June, 2007 to November, 2013. The scheme is closed. The State-wise details of towers installed under the scheme are given at Annexure-III.

Under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme, as on 31.05.2015, a subsidy of Rs. 403.42 cr has been disbursed to various service providers. The Circle wise disbursement of funds is given at Annexure-IV.

(c) to (e) : Mobile coverage to balance uncovered villages in the country is to be provided in a phased manner over a period of five years.

Providing mobile coverage to the uncovered villages in the North Eastern Region (NER) has been taken up initially as part of Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for NER.

(i) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region: Government approved a proposal on 10.09.2014 to implement a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region, at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 5336.18 crore. The Project envisages provision of mobile coverage to 8621 identified uncovered villages, installation of 321 mobile tower sites along National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya,

Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

(ii) Scheme for Mobile Communication Services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected Areas : Government, on 20.08.2014, approved a project to provide Mobile Services in 2199 locations in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 3567.58 crore. The scheme is being executed by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). A sum of Rs. 596.51 crore has been released to BSNL under the scheme till 31.05.2015.

(iii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands: Telecom Commission has given 'in principle' approval on 07.11.2014 for Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan including provision of mobile connectivity for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands with the total estimated investment of Rs. 221.05 crores.

The fund allocated and disbursed for all activities of USOF during the current five year plan (2012-17) is as under:-
(Amount in crore of rupees)

| Financial Year | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Allocated | 625.00 | 3000.00 | 2086.98 | 2400.00 |
| Expenditure | 625.00 | 2163.45 | 2086.98 | 14.04 |
| (Till 30.06.15) | | | | |

Annexure-I

State/Circle-wise details of Village Public Telephone and Mobile coverage

Name of the State/Circle Number of inhabited revenue villages as per Census 2001 No. of VPTs provided

Andaman & Nicobar 501 352

Andhra Pradesh/Telangana 26613 25107

Assam 25124 24692

Bihar 39032 38941

Jharkhand 29354 28821

Gujarat 18159 18054

Haryana 6764 6678

Himachal Pradesh 17495 16390

Jammu & Kashmir 6417 6385

Karnataka 27481 27451

Kerala 1372 1321

Madhya Pradesh 52117 51986

Chhattisgarh 19744 18328

Maharashtra 41442 40544

Meghalaya 5782 5290

Mizoram 707 704

Tripura 858 858

Arunachal Pradesh 3863 2810

Manipur 2315 2174

Nagaland 1278 1263

Odisha 47529 45215

Punjab 12301 12065

Rajasthan 39753 39568

Tamilnadu 15492 15492

Uttar Pradesh 97942 97852

Uttarakhand 15761 15271

West Bengal 37955 37142

Sikkim 450 429

Total 5,93,601 5,81,183

Annexure-II

State-wise list of uncovered villages with mobile services

S.No. Name of the State/UT Total number of inhabited villages Number of Uncovered Villages

1. Andhra Pradesh 16335 3812

2. Arunachal Pradesh 5258 2886

3. Assam 25372 2885

4. Bihar 39073 2534

5. Chhattisgarh 19567 4041

6. Goa 320 65
7. Gujarat 17843 1275
8. Haryana 6642 2
9. Himachal Pradesh 17882 2416
10. Jammu & Kashmir 6337 460
11. Jharkhand 29492 5949
12. Karnataka 27397 0
13. Kerala 1017 0
14. Madhya Pradesh 51929 5926
15. Maharashtra 40959 4792
16. Manipur 2515 610
17. Meghalaya 6459 2389
18. Mizoram 704 258
19. Nagaland 1400 137
20. Odisha 47675 10398
21. Punjab 12168 91
22. Rajasthan 43264 770
23. Sikkim 425 23
24. Tamil Nadu 15049 113
25. Telangana 10347 1009
26. Tripura 863 2
27. Uttar Pradesh 97814 266
28. Uttarakhand 15745 1876
29. West Bengal 37469 487
30. Andaman & Nicobar 684 190
31. Puducherry 0
32. Dadra & Nagar Haveli 5
33. Daman & Diu 1
34. Lakshadweep 1
- TOTAL 597608 55669

Annexure-III

State-wise details of towers installed under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure scheme

| Sl. No. | Name of State | Total no. of sites commissioned |
|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh and Telangana | 327 |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 65 |
| 3 | Assam | 87 |
| 4 | Bihar | 453 |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 553 |
| 6 | Gujarat | 59 |
| 7 | Haryana | 12 |
| 8 | Himachal Pradesh | 258 |
| 9 | Jammu & Kashmir | 81 |
| 10 | Jharkhand | 273 |
| 11 | Karnataka | 381 |
| 12 | Kerala | 43 |
| 13 | Madhya Pradesh | 933 |
| 14 | Maharashtra | 956 |
| 15 | Manipur | 69 |
| 16 | Meghalaya | 107 |
| 17 | Mizoram | 43 |
| 18 | Nagaland | 50 |
| 19 | Odisha | 434 |
| 20 | Punjab | 14 |
| 21 | Rajasthan | 403 |
| 22 | Sikkim | 6 |
| 23 | Tamilnadu | 327 |
| 24 | Telangana | 269 |
| 25 | Tripura | 115 |
| 26 | Uttarakhand | 184 |
| 27 | Uttar Pradesh | 652 |
| 28 | West Bengal | 163 |
| | TOTAL | 7,317 |

Annexure-IV

Circle wise disbursement of funds

State Amount (in Rs. Cr.)

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana 53.52

Assam 5.60

Bihar 14.46

Chhattisgarh 37.33

Gujarat 2.01

Haryana 0.42

Himachal Pradesh 11.10

Jammu & Kashmir 10.00

Jharkhand 11.61

Karnataka 17.56

Kerala 1.67

Maharashtra 45.74

Madhya Pradesh 25.90

North East (NE-I) (Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram) 40.14

North East-II (Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland) 16.60

Odisha 17.38

Punjab 0.47

Rajasthan 21.66

Tamil Nadu 10.27

Uttar Pradesh(East) 32.60

Uttar Pradesh (West) 9.08

Uttaranchal 12.55

West Bengal 5.75

Total 403.42
