

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:669

ANSWERED ON:19.07.2017

Telecom Services in Rural Areas

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of mobile phone and landline connections being provided by different Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) including Telecom PSUs in urban and rural areas separately, State/UT-wise and TSP-wise;

(b) the percentage of rural households in the country that currently have access to telecom services including internet facilities, State/UT-wise;

(c) whether the BSNL proposes to provide good quality telecom service including 3G services and install mobile towers in each village of the country and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government so far in this regard including the total number of 3G mobile towers erected in the villages, State/UT-wise;

(d) the number of villages with a population of more than 5000 where BSNL has provided telecom services, State/UT-wise along with the number of such villages which are yet to be provided with these services, State/UT-wise and time by which the said services will be made available to these villages; and

(e) whether the total number of mobile towers is adequate in comparison to the total number of subscribers in the country and if so, the details thereof including the number of mobile towers erected, State/ UT-wise and if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) The Service Area-wise total number of mobile phone and landline connections provided by different Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) including Telecom PSUs in urban and rural areas as well as the details of TSP wise telephone connections as on 31-05-2017 are given at Annexure-I and Annexure-II respectively.

(b) Based on the results of the latest survey on Social Consumption: Education conducted by NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) during January 2014 to June 2014, the estimated percentage of households (with at least one member of age 14 years and above) having access to use internet facility in rural areas, for each State/UT is given at Annexure-III

(c) BSNL has wide spread network covering rural areas based on techno commercial viability/feasibility. For improvement/up-gradation of mobile services in BSNL's network, Mobile equipment is being procured / upgraded progressively from time to time. At present GSM (Global System for Mobile communication) Phase VII+ expansion project is under roll out. It includes installation of 13213 3G Node Bs. Out of this 11585 3G Node Bs are already on air. Remaining Nodes are being commissioned progressively. Service area wise 3G BTSs (Base Trans-receiver Stations) installed in the network including rural areas is at Annexure-IV.

(d) Out of 20941 villages with a population of more than 5000, BSNL has covered 19430 villages with mobile services and remaining are progressively commissioned based on techno commercial viability & feasibility. Circle wise details is at Annexure-IV.

(e) The telecom towers are installed with a long-term view to serve for the license duration which is twenty years at a time. Roll out of new sites is a continuous process and depends on changing traffic requirements from customers' end. There is no universal criterion to fix number of towers as per geographic area or population density. Therefore, technically there is no specific correlation between the number of subscribers in the country versus the number of mobile towers erected by the service providers, as a single tower could accommodate multiple BTSs. The requirement for mobile tower in any area remains dynamic in nature. The location and required number of towers in any area is dependent upon many long-term factors such as physical terrain, frequency used, type of network – 2G, 3G or 4G, and short-term factors such as variations in user-density at a given location and time, re-location of towers due to non-renewal of tenancy agreements etc.

The total number of mobile towers in different licensed service areas is given in Annexure –V.