GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:95
ANSWERED ON:14.07.2014
USO FUND
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the basic objectives of Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund and the details of works undertaken therein under various schemes;

(b) whether the roll out of services by private telecom companies under various schemes of the USO Fund have been completed within the prescribed time frame;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the names of the companies which have not fulfilled the obligation under USO Fund within the roll out period; and

(d) the action taken by the Government against defaulter companies, company-wise?

Answer

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

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS

(a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 95 FOR 14TH JULY, 2014 REGARDING "USO FUND"

(a) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) was established with the objective of providing financial support to provide all types of telegraph services including mobile services, broadband connectivity and creation of infrastructure, in rural and remote areas.

The details of works undertaken by USOF under various schemes are as below:
(i) National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN): NOFN project is planned to provide broadband connectivity by linking all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 Lakh) in the country through optical fibre by laying incremental fiber wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks.

(ii) Creation of OFC Infrastructure: This scheme has been launched to provide sufficient back-haul capacity to integrate the voice and data traffic from the access network in the rural areas in the North-East to their core network by strengthening the Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) infrastructure.

(iii) Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme: 7317 Mobile towers (i.e. about 99.51% of the targeted 7353 towers) have been installed in villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage with financial support of USOF under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme. The infrastructure so created is capable of being shared by three service providers for provision of mobile services.

(iv) Rural Wireline Broadband Scheme for provision of Broadband Connections: Under this scheme, 8,88,832 wire-line Broadband connections to individual users & Government Institutions and 28,672 Kiosks are being provided by BSNL over a period of six years, i.e. by 2015, in rural and remote areas with financial support from USOF.

(v) Village Public Telephones: Village Public Telephones (VPTs) are being provided by BSNL in inhabited uncovered villages as per Census 2001 with financial support from USOF. As on 31.05.2014, 5,82, 368 out of 5,93,601 inhabited villages as per Census 2001 have been covered with VPTs.
(vi) Provision of individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs): Rural household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) were provided during 2005 to 2007, in eligible 1685 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs), where cost of providing telephone connection was more than the revenue earned. About 79.3 lakh RDELs have been provided under this scheme.

(vii) Provision of Rural Community Phones (RCPs): 40,694 Rural Community Phones (RCPs) have been provided in villages with population more than 2000 and not having Public Call Office (PCO) facility.

(b) to (d): There have been some delays by telecom companies in implementing the schemes. Government has imposed Liquidated Damages (LD) for delays in roll-out as per terms and conditions of the agreements signed by the executing entities with USOF. An amount of Rs. 1.72 Crores towards LD has been recovered from private telecom companies implementing the USOF schemes. Company-wise details are given at Annexure.