

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1571

ANSWERED ON:21.07.2014

INSTALLATION OF MOBILE TOWERS

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

- (a) the norms/guidelines laid down for installation of mobile towers in the country;
- (b) whether a large number of mobile towers have been installed near residential areas, public buildings, schools, etc. in the country;
- (c) if so, the details of such towers, State/UT/company-wise and the steps taken by the Government to remove these towers from such areas and also the action taken against the telecom operators for violation of norms in installation of such towers;
- (d) whether the Government has any records of the mobile towers installed without prior clearance from concerned bodies and local authorities in various parts of the country and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether any compensation is provided/proposed to be provided to the persons affected by mobile radiation and if so, the details thereof and if not, the measures taken to minimize and neutralize the impact of radiation from mobile towers?

Answer

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

(a) Madam, as per the existing policy for installation of towers, Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC) wing of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issues siting clearance for installation of mobile towers for each and every site from the point of view of interference with other wireless users, aviation hazards and obstruction to any other existing microwave links. However, siting clearances of DoT are issued without prejudice to other applicable bylaws, rule and regulations of local bodies such as municipal corporation, Gram Panchayat etc. Accordingly, before installation of tower, the telecom service providers have to obtain necessary clearances from concerned local authorities/ State Government bodies also. Various local bodies/State Government have formulated their own policy regarding grant of such permissions for installation of mobile towers. DoT, has issued advisory guidelines for state governments on 23.08.2012 for issue of clearance for installation of mobile towers and the same has been forwarded to the Chief Secretaries of all State Governments. The above said guidelines have been further revised with effect from 01.08.2013.

(b) & (c) The site location for tower installation is decided by Telecom Service Providers as per their business and technical requirements. As on 31.05.2014, there are approx 8,01,000 total number of Base Transceiver Stations (BTSS) installed at mobile towers all over the country including those in residential areas, public buildings, schools etc. as there is no restriction on installation of mobile BTSS in such areas.

(d) DoT does not maintain the information about grant of permissions for installation of mobile towers by State Government bodies / Local authorities.

(e) World Health Organization (WHO) in its Fact Sheet No. 304, May 2006 on Electro Magnetic Fields (EMF) and Public Health (Base Stations and Wireless Technologies) has concluded that "considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak Radio Frequency (RF) Signals from base stations and wireless networks cause adverse health effects." "From all evidence accumulated so far, no adverse short or long term health effects have been shown to occur from the RF Signals produced by base stations (mobile phone towers)". WHO, after studying approximately 25,000 studies over past 30 years has concluded that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to EMF radiation. Continuous studies are being carried out nationally as well as internationally to study health effect of EMF radiation from mobile towers. So far there is no conclusive scientific evidence of any adverse health effect due to RF emission from mobile phone towers. Therefore, the need to consider any compensation does not arise.

WHO has recommended that 'National authorities should adopt international standards to protect their citizens against adverse levels of RF fields. They should restrict access to areas where exposure limits may be exceeded.' WHO has referred to the International Exposure Guidelines developed by International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Department of Telecommunication (DoT) has made an assessment of health effects of EMF radiations and prescribed stricter precautionary limits for EMF radiation from mobile tower. The present prescribed limits for EMF radiations from Base Station in India are one-tenth (1/10th) of internationally prescribed limits of ICNIRP.

In a Writ Petition filed in Hon'ble High Court Allahabad, Lucknow bench, the Hon'ble Court vide its order dated 10.01.2012 constituted a committee consisting of Members of IITs Bombay, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Delhi, Roorkee and other prominent persons of other

scientific institutions of the country like AIIMS (Delhi), Indian Council of Medical Research, etc who has submitted its report on 17-01-2014. After due consideration of the human health concerns on account of EMF radiation being raised in public and the Report of the Committee, the Government has decided in February 2014 that the present prescribed precautionary EMF safe exposure limits are adequate and need no further change at this stage.

Further, Telecom Enforcement Resource & Monitoring (TERM) field units of DoT are ensuring compliance to the prescribed stricter precautionary norms of EMF from mobile tower through extensive audit of comprehensive compliance self-certificates being submitted by telecom service providers and Base Transceiver Station (BTS) sites. This is regularly done by TERM units for the purpose of limiting the EMF radiation exposure and keeping general public areas in the vicinity of towers safe. In case, any BTS site is found to violate the prescribed EMF norms, actions are taken to put a penalty of Rs. 10 lakh per BTS per incidence including closing of BTS site as per the prescribed procedure.