

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4091
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
MOBILE SERVICE IN RURAL AREAS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has directed the private mobile- service operators to provide their services in rural areas at concessional rates;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government to ensure better mobile service in rural areas; and
- (c) the details regarding percentage of subscribers in rural areas in comparison to the total number of subscribers of private mobile-service operators?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) & (b) In terms of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

(TRAI) Act 1997, the Government has mandated TRAI to fix up the tariff for telecom services including cellular mobile services. With regard to tariff for mobile services, TRAI has forborne tariff for mobile service except for national roaming service and mobile operators are free to offer their tariff in rural areas. As such mobile operators have not been directed to provide mobile services in rural areas at concessional rates.

As per terms and conditions of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) and Unified Access Services Licence (UASL) Agreement, the roll out obligation of mobile service providers covers 50% District Headquarters (DHQs) and expansion beyond 50% DHQs/towns totally depends on the business decision of mobile service providers. Further, there is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas.

However, wherever mobile service is provided by the licensee, TRAI has been mandated to monitor QoS. In this regard, TRAI has set benchmarks for assessing QoS provided by mobile service providers and continuously monitors the same through surveys conducted from time to time.

(c) The Government does not maintain the information regarding number of mobile subscribers in rural areas separately. The total number of subscribers of private mobile operators as on 28.02.2005 is 41.20 Millions.