

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4880  
ANSWERED ON:27.04.2005  
MODERN TELECOM INFRASTRUCTURE  
Satpathy Shri Tathagata

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

- (a) whether the focus of Tenth Five Year Plan is to build a modern and efficient telecom infrastructure to provide world class telecommunication facilities at affordable rates;
- (b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to achieve the goal; and
- (c) the extent to which the Government has been able to achieve the goal during the first three years of the Tenth Five Year Plan?

**Answer**

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

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the Tenth Plan, the radically forward-looking Telecom Policy-1999 is in the process of implementation. It encourages convergence between telecom, information technology and media. For providing rural telephony, a non-lapsable Universal Service Obligation Fund has been created during the Plan to support the telecom operators in rural areas. An amount of Rs. 1814.50 crore has been provided for rural telephony through this fund during 2002-03 to 2004-05. To encourage broadband connectivity in the country at a faster pace, Broadband Policy has been announced in October, 2004 which is under implementation. Efforts are also on to meet the spectrum requirement of the fast expanding wireless telephony. The telecom sector now is open for unrestricted entry except for mobile telephony and the increasing competition has resulted in drastic reduction in telecom traffis, benefiting the consumers at large.

Today, all the telephone Exchanges are digital electronic and are connected on reliable media. Internet connectivity has been provided in all the district headquarters. Further, of the 6.07 lakh villages in the country, 5.31 lakh have been provided Village Public Telephones as on 31.03.2005.

(c) As against the target of providing 650 Lakh additional phones during the 10th Plan period (2002-2007) to achieve a teledensity target of 9.91%, 534.45 Lakh phones have been provided during April, 2002 to March 31, 2005. As such, a teledensity of 9.10% has already been achieved.