

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1
ANSWERED ON:17.02.2006
TELECOMMUNICATION AND POSTAL NETWORK FACILITIES
Baxla Shri Joachim

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to provide the telecommunication and postal network facilities to the remote, under-developed hilly regions of West Bengal;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the areas identified therefor;
- (c) the number of villages in districts Cooch Bihar and Jalpaiguri which have been provided these facilities, district-wise;
- (d) whether the existing telecommunication facilities in the small towns and villages of these districts are non-functional; and
- (e) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken by the Government to make them functional?

Answer

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

Reply pertaining to Department of Telecommunications

- (a) Village Public Telephones have been provided in all eligible villages of remote and hilly areas of West Bengal. This excludes villages having less than 100 population, villages lying in thick forest area/naxalite infested areas etc.
- (b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.
- (c) District wise number of villages provided with telecommunication facilities is as under:

Cooch Bihar District = 1170 villages

Jalpaiguri District = 703 villages

- (d) & (e) 53 villages in Cooch Bihar District where telecommunication facilities were extended by Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) technology are non-functional due to defective MARR technology. Action has already been initiated for replacement of the defective telephones on MARR technology by Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) or Landline telephones and the replacement work is expected to be completed by June, 2006.

Reply pertaining to Department of Posts

- (a) & (b) Postal network facilities are provided to all areas, including remote, under developed and hilly regions. No plan targets are being allotted for opening of new Post Offices since the year 2004-05, in consonance with the policy directives of the Xth Five Year Plan. However, justified Post Offices are opened in all areas including remote, under developed and hilly regions of West Bengal by relocating those post offices which do not comply with the norms prescribed by the Department. In West Bengal Postal Circle, Nayarhat Bazar in Cooch Bihar District and Khirkuri in Uttar Dinajpur District have been identified for opening of Post Offices by relocation.
- (c) Out of 1,139 villages in District Cooch Bihar and 734 villages in District Jalpaiguri, Post Offices are located in 327 villages and 255 villages respectively.