

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2187
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2005
RURAL TELECOM SERVICES BY PRIVATE OPERATORS
Chandrapan Shri C.K.;Reddy Shri Suravaram Sudhakar

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

- (a) whether mandatory provision of rural telecom services by private telecom operators was removed in the year 2003;
- (b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the digital divide between the rural and the urban areas has increased since then;
- (d) if so, whether the Government proposes to reimpose mandatory provision on private telecom operators; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Consequent upon announcement of guidelines for migration of Basic Service Operators to Unified Access Service Licence Regime, various private basic telecom operators migrated to Unified Access Service Licence after payment of prescribed entry fee equivalent to that of fourth cellular service licensee in the respective service area.

On migration, the roll out obligations changed as for Fourth Cellular Mobile Service Providers (CMSPs) as per details below:-

- (i) At least 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the District headquarters will be covered within three years from the date of migration.
 - (ii) The licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District headquarters.
 - (iii) Coverage of a DHQ/town would mean that at least 90% of the area bounded by the Municipal limits should get the required street as well as in-building coverage.
 - (iv) The District Headquarters shall be taken as on the effective date of Licence.
 - (v) The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision.
 - (vi) There is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas.
- (c) The rural tele-density as on March 2003 was 1.49 as compared to urban tele-density of 14.32. As on 30th September 2005, the rural tele-density has increased to 1.77 as compared to urban tele-density of 31.25. The telecom service providers are not going for faster roll out in rural areas mainly because of commercial unviability of providing communication infrastructure in rural areas.
- (d) There is no such proposal at present.
- (e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.