

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3215

ANSWERED ON:14.12.2005

REPLACING MARR BASED VPT BY WLL

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

- (a) whether the target of replacing Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based VPT by those based on the WLL system in all villages of the country has been achieved;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of villages covered so far out of the target fixed for the Tenth Plan;
- (d) whether any assessment has been made for the first quarter of the current year;
- (e) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (f) whether the Union Government has been lagging in its scheme for extending telephone facilities to the rural areas;
- (g) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (h) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) As per agreement signed between Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), all Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based Village Public Telephones (VPTs) are targeted to be replaced progressively by June, 2006.

(c) Out of 1,86,872 MARR VPTs, 1,30,915 MARR VPTs have so far been replaced during the 10th Five Year Plan.

(d) & (e) During the 1st quarter of the current financial year, 2,381 MARR VPTs have been replaced.

(f) No, Sir.

(g) Does not arise in view of (f) above.

(h) The Government is providing telecom facilities in rural areas of the country with support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). USOF entered into agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and private service providers for providing following telecom facilities in rural areas of the country:-

Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) by November, 2007 in 66,822 remaining unconnected villages. This excludes villages having population lying in thick forest areas/Naxalite infested areas.

Provision of Rural Community Phones (RCPs) by September, 2007 in 46,253 villages having population of more than 2,000 and not having a PCO.

Provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) 'on demand' in 1,685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the first quarter of the year 2006.