

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4264
ANSWERED ON:21.12.2005
PRIVATE TELEPHONE CELLULAR OPERATORS IN RURAL AREAS
Sippiparai Shri A. Ravichandran

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that Private Telephone/Cellular operators are not interested in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (c) the details of broadband connections provided for Tamil Nadu during the current financial year?

Answer

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

- (a) These telecom service providers (especially those in private sector) are focussing more on urban areas because of higher revenue per line in urban areas compared to that in rural areas. This has resulted in more urban centric development of network. Higher economic and literacy status in the urban areas are also contributing factors.
- (b) The Government has set up Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to facilitate provision of telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country. All the players (private and public) in the telecom sector are paying Universal Service Levy (USL) at the rate of 5% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) which is being utilized by USOF for increasing rural telephone network.
- (c) During the current financial year 49,785 broadband connections have been provided in Tamil Nadu.