

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1118
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2007
TELE -DENSITY IN RURAL AREAS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the present rural tele-density is 1.67% as compared to 26% in urban areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government has any plan to increase the rural tele-density in all over the country, especially in rural areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.(BSNL) is not providing cable telephone connections in certain areas but giving WLL connections only; and
- (f) if so, the reasons therefor?

Answer

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

- (a) As on 31.1.2007, the tele-density in rural areas is 1.86 as compared to tele-density of 55.43 in urban areas.
- (b) The contributing factors for higher tele-density in urban areas as compared to rural areas are as under:-
 - (i) Higher economic and literacy status as well as easier availability of supporting infrastructure in the urban areas as compared to rural areas.
 - (ii) The private sector telecom service providers are generally focusing more on urban areas because of higher revenue per line in urban areas as compared to that in rural areas.
- (c) Yes, Sir.
- (d) Following steps are being taken by the Government to improve the tele-density especially in rural areas in the country:-
 - (i) Replacement of Multi-Access Radio Relay (MARR) Village Public Telephones (VPTs).
 - (ii) Provision of Rural Household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) on demand in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).
 - (iii) Government is in the process of launching a scheme to provide for setting up and managing infrastructure sites for provision of mobile services including other wireless services like Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) using Fixed/Mobile Terminals in the specified rural and remote areas of the country, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage.
 - (iv) Large scale deployment of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network in rural areas by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).
 - (v) Relaxation of the outdoor cable norms to 5 kms. as against the earlier norm of 2.5 kms. for landline exchanges by BSNL.
 - (vi) BSNL has planned extensive infrastructure roll out which will provide mobile coverage.
- (e) BSNL is providing wired line telephone connection with 5 kms. of local exchange. The demand beyond 5 kms of the local exchange and non feasible area within 5 kms. is met on WLL.
- (f) The telephone connections beyond 5 kms. of local exchange are provided on WLL as provision of telephone on wired line is techno-commercially unviable.