

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2179
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
DIGITAL CONNCTIVITY INDEX
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of Digital Connectivity Index of India as compared to other Asian Broadband Economy;
- (b) whether the Indian Telecom Revolution has so far not reached in rural areas of the country;
- (c) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to extend benefits of telecom technology in rural areas on priority basis?

Answer

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

(a) As on 31.01.2007, about 22 lakh Broadband connections have been provided in about 800 cities/towns. South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore have achieved household Broadband connectivity of 60%.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to extend benefits of telecom technology in rural areas on priority basis inter-alia are as follows:

With the passing of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Bill, 2006 it will be possible to provide USO support for provision of mobile services and Broadband connectivity in rural areas. USO subsidy support scheme will be utilized for shared wireless infrastructure in rural areas with about 8,000 towers by 2007.

Emphasis is being given to the technologies having potential to improve rural connectivity. A target has been set for 50 million rural connections by 2007.

Focus has been laid on localization and development of local content to help bridge digital divide in development of tools and fonts in all major Indian languages by 2007.

To facilitate speedy rural penetration, efforts are on to make available the mobile handsets at about Rs. 1000/-.

Target has been set for 9 million broadband connections in the country including rural areas by the year 2007.

Proliferation of broadband connectivity is planned in rural areas through both wire line and wireless technologies.