

(e) if so, the concrete steps and measures Government proposes to take to improve position in the country further and whether any target has been set for the purpose during 2009-10?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India's wireless telephones stood at 261.08 million at the end of March 2008 as compared to 257.74 million in United States of America (USA). With the average additions of about 9 million wireless subscribers per month, India has 325.73 million wireless subscribers as on 31.10.2008.

(d) There is demand of wireless telephones in rural areas and on an average about 3 million rural wireless telephones are being provided every month in the country.

(e) The following steps are taken/being taken by the Government to further expand the mobile network in rural areas:

- (i) A scheme has already been launched by Government under Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund to provide subsidy support for setting up and managing 7871 number of infrastructure sites (towers) in 500 district spread over 27 states for provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas of the country, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. As on 31.10.2008, about 1934 towers in the country have already been set up under this scheme.
- (ii) Further, it is proposed to cover other uncovered areas in the country through mobile services by installing about 11,000 additional towers in the second phase.
- (iii) BSNL has proposed to increase its mobile telephone capacity by 93 million lines to meet the requirement of mobile services in its area of operation for the next three years.

In the eleventh five year plan, it has been envisaged to provide 100 million rural telephone connections by the end of 2009-10 and 200 million by the end of March 2012. There are about 109.05 million subscribers in the rural areas as on 31.10.2008. BSNL has tentatively planned to add 13.2 million connections in its area of operation during 2009-2010.

India as product nation in software programming

1099. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

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

(a) whether India needs to surpass from being a purely back office and software programming nation to a product nation;

(b) if so, whether India also need to transcend its boundaries from a purely back office and software programming nation to a product nation because that's where intellectual property lies; and

(c) if so, the concrete measures and steps his Ministry has taken to modify the value scheme and focus on hardware as well and the other main steps the Ministry has considered to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) This is a natural progression that companies look to make thereby moving up the value chain and creating Intellectual Property Rights for themselves. Nevertheless, while companies, and as an aggregate of companies, the country, moves up the value chain, there will still be work at the lower end of the value chain e.g., back office programming, etc that will continue to be done.

India has been making progress on this front. The Engineering Services, R and D and Software products has been showing growth over the past few years, as indicated below:

Year	Revenue for Engineering R and D, Software products
Financial Year 2004	USD 2.9 Bn
Financial Year 2005	USD 3.8 Bn
Financial Year 2006	USD 5.3 Bn
Financial Year 2007	USD 6.5 Bn
Financial Year 2008	USD 8.6 Bn

(c) Department of Information Technology (DIT) has put in place the following schemes:

A scheme SIP-EIT to Support International Patent Protection in Electronics and ICT has been launched in Department of Information Technology for SMEs and Start up companies. Under this scheme, 50% of expenditure incurred for filing International patent is reimbursed. The objective of the scheme is to help SMEs/Start ups to realize the value of patents and take advantage of their IPR portfolios to move up the value chain.

Multiplier Grants Scheme : The objective of the scheme is to encourage industry to collaborate with premier Academic and Government R and D institutions for development of innovative and commercially viable products/packages. Under this scheme, the Government would provide grants upto the maximum of twice the amount invested by the industry/industry consortium/association towards the innovation at academic/R and D institution.

Scheme for Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE) in the area of Electronics, ICT and Management : The scheme aims to assist institutions of higher learning (IITs, IIMs, IIITs and NITs) to strengthen their Technology Incubation Centres and thus enable young entrepreneurs to initiate technology start up companies for commercial exploitation of technologies developed by them.

Shares of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited

†1100. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to sell its shares in Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

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

No-service zone in border areas

†1101. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

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

(a) the area covered under 'No-Service Zone' at the borders presently and in the past;

(b) whether it is a fact that the terrorists and smugglers at particular are taking advantage of availability of mobile services alongwith the international border; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to tackle this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) The word "No Service Zone" was introduced *vide* amendment to relevant license condition of mobile service providers on 26th February, 2007. The area covered in "No Service Zone" was 500 Meter width along International Borders. Subsequently, *vide* amendment dated 11th July, 2008; the "Non Service Zone" restriction has been removed.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Merger of ITI units with BSNL

1102. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

SHRI D. RAJA:

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

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.