

multistage bidding process. Elimination of bidding process without delinking licensing from spectrum was not intended by TRAI. "

- II. Observation of the One Man Committee (OMC): In the matter the OMC in its report dated 31.01.2011 has inter alia, opined the following:

Para 6.1 (ii) "Though the recommendations of TRAI dated 27.10.2003 for unified licensing regime in para 7.39 contained express recommendation that introduction of additional players in UASL regime had to be through a multistage bidding process, Mr. Vinod Vaish, the then Secretary, DoT, appears to have sought opinion of the Chairman, TRAI on some aspect through a telephonic talk instead of making proper reference in writing as required under second proviso to section 11 (1) of TRAI Act as has been the practice. The Chairman, TRAI wrote a letter dated 14.11.2003, which was sought to be interpreted to infer conclusion as regards entry fee payable by fresh UASL contrary to and inconsistent with the express recommendations of TRAI. Based on such interpretation on 24.11.2003 a procedure was formulated to apply the entry fee paid by 4th Cellular operators (discovered in 2001) to new entrants under UASL regime in 2003 and also to consider applications for grant of UASL on FCFS basis. Formulation of procedure thus, was contrary to the decision of Union Cabinet dated 31.10.2003 which approved recommendations of TRAI dated 27.10.2003; before formulating such procedure recommendations from TRAI were not obtained; and the matter was not placed before the Telecom Commission. The decision to apply entry fee discovered in 2001 for the new entrants without revision was also opposed to the policy requirement of the price of spectrum being commensurate with opportunity cost..."

Last mile telephone connectivity in villages

*66. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) how many villages in the country do not have the last mile connectivity through basic telephony; and

(b) how many of such villages have cellular footprints?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Out of the total of 5,93,601 inhabited villages in the country as per Census 2001, 5,74,673 villages have been covered with Village Public Telephones (VPTs) as on 31.01.2011.

(b) Out of the villages not covered with basic telephony, 2709 villages have been provided with VPTs on cellular Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) technology by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).