

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3259
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23RD MARCH, 2018**

MANDATORY PROVISION OF GPS IN FEATURE PHONES

3259. SHRI T.G. VENKATESH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is likely to make GPS mandatory in feature phones by withdrawing an exemption it granted earlier;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the association of mobile manufacturers has consented to the introduction of this feature, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry of Women and Child Development has also sought the Telecom Ministry's help for introduction of panic button along with this system, which would help the women in distress, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) & (b) Department of Telecommunications has issued an amendment through Gazette Notification No. 946 of G.S.R. 1441 (E) dated 23.11.2017 with title "Panic Button and Global Positioning System facility in all mobile phone handsets (Amendment) Rules 2017" stating that "with effect from 1st January 2018 no smart phone handset manufacturing company shall sell the new smart mobile phone handset in India without the facility of identifying the location through Satellite based GPS". At present there is no proposal to make GPS mandatory in feature phones.

(c) Indian Cellular Association (ICA) had submitted to Department of Telecommunications that introduction of GPS facility in feature phones will substantially increase the cost of feature phones which are generally used by the population below poverty line. ICA has also mentioned following technical issues in implementing GPS in feature phones:

- (i) No third party configurable Operating System (OS).
- (ii) Cannot download & run applications (Apps).
- (iii) Software cannot be upgraded over the air.
- (iv) Feature phones have no intelligence, are not programmable and have limited Memory.

(d) Ministry of Women and Child Development had sought inclusion of panic button in all mobile phone handsets vide letter dated 08th July 2015, which would help the women in distress. Accordingly the panic button in all mobile phone handsets (Feature phones as well as smart phones) has been implemented w.e.f. 01st March 2017. The Panic button in mobile phones can be operated as follows:-

- (i) Feature Phones:- Prolong pressing of Numeric Key -5 or Numeric Key -9 to invoke emergency calls; and
- (ii) Smart Phones:- Emergency call button by pressing the same for long time to invoke emergency call or the use of existing power on or off button, when short pressed thrice in quick succession.
