

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 334
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28TH NOVEMBER, 2024**

UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND

334 SHRI SANJAY SETH:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the provision of Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has been incorporated in the Telecom Policy, 1999;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether all the telecom operator companies have deposited their respective amount of gross revenue in the USO Fund as per the rules; and
- (d) the State-wise details of money spent from the USO Fund during the last five years for mobile network in the country particularly in Uttar Pradesh along with the achievements thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) to (d) In New Telecom Policy 1999, Government expressed its commitment to provide access to all people for basic telecom services at affordable and reasonable prices under Universal Service Obligation (USO). Digital Bharat Nidhi (erstwhile USOF) was established under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 w.e.f. 01.04.2002. As per 'The Telecommunications Act, 2023' the Universal Service Obligation Fund, has become the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN). The DBN has mandate to support universal service through promoting access and delivery of telecommunication service in underserved rural, remote and urban areas.

At present, as per the License agreement, the license fee is based on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) which includes USO Levy. Telecom Service Providers are depositing the Licence Fee as per license agreement.

During the last five financial years (2019-20 to 2023-24), total 5,262 towers were installed and an amount of Rs. 8,311 Cr. was spent including Rs. 144 Crore for Uttar Pradesh. The State/UT-wise details of funds spent from USO Fund during the said period is available at the USOF website (<https://usof.gov.in>).
