

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 405  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2018**

**UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND**

405. SHRI PRATHAP SIMH A:  
SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:  
KUMARI SHOBHA KARANDLAJE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount collected by way of charging Universal Access Levy (UAL) on telecom operators, since 2014, year-wise, to date;
- (b) the details of the figures of balance amount in the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) starting from FY 2013-14 till FY 2017-18;
- (c) the year-wise list of projects introduced that are being funded through the USOF since 2014 and disbursement of funds project-wise for each year;
- (d) whether Telecom Companies currently pay 5% of the AGR (Adjusted Gross Revenue) towards maintaining USOF;
- (e) whether the Universal Service Obligation Fund(USOF) has been set up to fund projects to boost connectivity in rural and remote areas and the details of the main functions of USOF; and
- (f) the measures being taken to promote progressive technologies to enhance rural infrastructure?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Year wise statement of Universal Access Levy (UAL) from 2013-14 to date is enclosed as **ANNEXURE-A**.
- (b) Balance of Universal Access Levy (UAL) from 2013-14 to 2017-18 is enclosed as **ANNEXURE-B**.
- (c) Subsidy disbursed under various USOF schemes from 2013-14 to 2017-18 and current financial year is enclosed as **ANNEXURE-C**.

(d) Yes.

(e) The main functions of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) include:

- Providing access to telecom services to people in the rural and remote areas at affordable and reasonable prices.
- Provide subsidy support for enabling access to all types of telecom services including mobile services, broadband connectivity and creation of infrastructure like OFC in rural and remote areas.
- Formulation of benchmark cost and finalizing of bidding procedure / process including relevant terms and conditions for this purpose
- Monitor the performance of the schemes through Designated Agencies.

(f) The details of measures being taken to promote progressive technologies to enhance rural infrastructure is enclosed as **ANNEXURE-D**.

**ANNEXURE –A****Year wise collection of Universal Access Levy (UAL)**

Year	Rs. in Crore
2014-15	7537.88
2015-16	9835.70
2016-17	9763.87
2017-18	7019.22
2018-19	2182.16

**ANNEXURE –B****Balance of Universal Access Levy (UAL) from 2013-14 to 2017-18**

Year	Rs. in Crore
2014-15	39133.76
2015-16	45869.46
2016-17	48406.29
2017-18	48426.75

## ANNEXURE-C

## YEAR WISE SUBSIDY DISBURSED UNDER VARIOUS USOF SCHEMES INTRODUCED SINCE 2013-14

Figures in Crore

Sl. No.	NAME OF SCHEMES	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 (upto 31.10.2018)
1	Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra					6.91	
2	BharatNet	514.00	1351.86	2415.10	5600.00	6000.00	1500.00
3	Mobile Connectivity in Left Wing Extremism areas (LWE)		596.51	617.05	280.68	710.90	253.90
4	Augmentation, Creation and Management of Optical Fiber Network in Assam (OFC Assam)		31.40				0.77
5	Augmentation, Creation and Management of Optical Fiber Network in NE-I (OFC-NE-I)			3.95	14.48		
6	Augmentation, Creation and Management of Optical Fiber Network in NE-II (OFC NE-II)				13.04		
7	Augmentation of Satellite Bandwidth in A & N Island			8.10			56.00
8	Augmentation of Satellite Bandwidth in Lakshadweep				4.65		
9	Submarine OFC connectivity in A&N Islands						93.25
10	Uncovered Villages under A&N					0.03	
11	Wi-Fi hotspots at 200 Gram Panchayats by BSNL using BharatNet backhaul, as a pilot project					2.81	
12	Setting up of Wi-Fi Choupals at 5,000 Gram Panchayats by Common Service Centre				35.70	68.16	
13	Setting up of 25,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots using the infrastructure of BSNL's telephone exchanges in rural areas					187.50	
14	Wi-Fi delivery model at 200 rural Railway Stations by M/s RailTel using their own backhaul, as a pilot project					7.39	0.50

**The details of measures being taken to promote progressive technologies to enhance rural infrastructure**

1. A scheme to support pilot projects on innovative technology, business model or any other aspect relating to provisions of broadband services in rural areas with USOF support.
2. A pilot project for setting up Wi-Fi hotspots at 200 rural railway stations by Railtel at an approx. capital cost of Rs.16.74 crore and annual operating cost of Rs. 11.03 crore has been implemented.
3. A project to set up Wi-Fi Network in all the Gram Panchayats with 5 Access Points, out of which 3 APs to be placed at Government institutions.

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