

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3714

ANSWERED ON:21.08.2003

IMPLEMENTATION PANEL ON CONDITIONAL ACCESS SYSTEM (CAS)

BHASKAR RAO PATIL;CHARAN DAS MAHANT;GADDE RAMAMOHAN;KAMAL NATH;M. DURAI;M.V.V.S MURTHI;RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA;SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI;SUNDER LAL TIWARI

**Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the proposed Conditional Access System (CAS) is in the interest of consumers, cable operators or the broadcasters;
- (b) if so, whether the Government are aware that the consumers are likely to be the worst sufferers both in terms financial benefit and recreation;
- (c) if so, whether the Government have set up an Implementation Panel of Broadcasters, Multi System Operators and Cable Operators to oversee the rollout of CAS;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the time by which the Implementation Panel has been asked to submit its report to the Government;
- (f) whether in view of Direct-To-Home (DTH) clearance, the Union Government propose to defer implementation of CAS;
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the time by which DTH service is likely to be started and the agency which would supply necessary equipment for the purpose alongwith the amount to be charged from the subscribers therefor; and
- (h) the extent to which the CAS would prove to be useful after the introduction of DTH service?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e): Since the proposed Conditional Access System is aimed at bringing in transparency and order, to the cable network, this is in the interest of consumers, cable operators and broadcasters.

CAS is consumer-friendly for the following reasons:-

- (i) Government has specified Rs. 72/- (Plus taxes) as the maximum price of basic service tier, consisting of not less than 30 free-to-air channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children`s programmes and music. Additional free-to-air channels would also be available to subscribers within the maximum amount mentioned.
- (ii) Consumers will have the choice to pay for only those pay channels which they choose to watch.
- (iii) Consumers will have control over the content, they wish to view.
- (iv) It has been made obligatory for cable operators to make provisions for rent, security deposit, repair and maintenance of Set Top Boxes (STB).
- (v) Some MSOs/Cable Operators have come out with consumer-friendly schemes through which the STBs will be made available to consumers.
- (vi) Government has reduced the duty on import of STB and its components to make the STB more affordable.

An Implementation Committee, comprising various stakeholders has been set up for effective coordination and monitoring of preparedness to implement Conditional Access System in the four metros w.e.f. 1.9.2003. The Committee would closely monitor the:-

(i) Availability of Set Top Boxes (STBs) and their readiness for installation.

(ii) Modalities of installation, including testing.

(iii) Upgradation of the infrastructure and network for implementation of CAS and steps taken to protect consumers' interest.

(iv) Availability of full information in respect of pricing of channels and the amount that cable TV subscribers will have to pay.

No report will be furnished by the Committee as it will regularly monitor the smooth implementation of CAS.

(f): No, Sir.

(g): Does not arise.

(h): DTH and cable networks are two different modes of delivery of content. CAS is a more cost-effective mode of delivery, while DTH provides premium service and is more effective in remote areas. Both the services can co-exist.