

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4034
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2010
T.V. CHANNELS IN THE COUNTRY
Ray Shri Rudramadhab

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

- (a) the details of the number of paid and free to the air TV Channels presently operating in the country;
- (b) whether the viewership/availability of such channels is restricted to urban and metropolitan areas;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken to enhance the viewership of such TV channels among the masses residing in rural and tribal areas of the country including Orissa?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. JATUA)

(a) : As on 19.4.2010, Ministry has permitted 464 private satellite TV channels to uplink from India as per uplinking guidelines and 76 private satellite TV channels, uplinked from abroad, to downlink in India as per downlinking guidelines. Out of the total 540 TV channels permitted under uplinking and downlinking guidelines, 147 channels are pay channels, as reported by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and the remaining 393 are free-to-air channels.

(b) : No, Sir. Under uplinking and downlinking guidelines, the permissions are granted on an all-India basis and not restricted to urban or metropolitan areas. Depending on the channel offerings, such channels are available on a pan-India basis through the Direct-to-Home (DTH) services.

(c) : Question does not arise.

(d) : The penetration of cable TV channels in the rural, tribal and remote areas has been reported to be less. Cable TV operation in remote areas is not cost effective due to lesser subscriber density and high infrastructure cost. To bring down the cost of setting up a digital cable service in general, Government has on 26.11.2009 notified policy guidelines for providing Headend-in-The-Sky (HITS) services.

It is expected that HITS services will make cable operations viable in rural/tribal areas thus giving access to satellite TV channels through cable services also in such areas Government is also facilitating the increase in capacity of the Doordarshan free-to-air DTH platform from the present 50 channels to 97 channels. This will further enhance the viewership of the satellite TV channels