

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:146
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2012
MONITORING DIGITAL CABLE TV SERVICE
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the government is monitoring the roll out of digitization of Cable TV Services in the country;
- (b) If so, the details thereof including the mechanism set up for the purpose;
- (c) Whether the government proposes to create a level playing field for cable operators and Direct To Home service providers;
- (d) If so, the details thereof ; and
- (e) The manner in which the interest of the consumers are being protected by the government?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 146 FOR ANSWER ON 04.12.2012

(a) & (b): The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been constantly monitoring the implementation of digitization of cable TV services in the country in order to ensure that the process is completed within the mandated timelines. The first phase of digitization has been completed in the metros of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata on 31.10.2012 and in Chennai, the matter is sub judice. A Task Force has been set up in the Ministry to spearhead the process of digitization of Cable TV. The Task Force, inter-alia, comprises representatives of Multi System Operators (MSOs), Cable Operators, Broadcasters, DTH operators State Governments, other industry associations, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Consumers, and concerned Ministries / Departments in the Central Government. During the implementation of Phase-I of digitization, the Task Force met 20 times on a fortnightly basis to review the progress of digitization. The Task Force served as a platform for addressing the concerns of individual stakeholders during the process of digital switch over in Phase-I. Teams from the Ministry also made regular field visits to assess the progress on ground. Progress of installation of digital headends and Set Top Boxes (STBs) by MSOs, was also closely monitored.

(c) & (d): Ministry has been promoting multiple digital distribution platforms such as Direct-to-Home (DTH), digital Cable TV, Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), Headend in the Sky (HITS) for content creators to be able to disseminate content, and for giving the viewers a wider choice in selecting the service provider and the services which best suit their needs. As regards DTH and digital Cable TV, the Ministry is providing a level playing field to both the platforms in the public interest as fair and effective competition between these two platforms will result into affordable price to consumers. TRAI has already laid down necessary regulations, including tariff, for these two distribution platforms to create level playing field.

(e) TRAI has already issued various regulations for protecting the interest of consumers of digital addressable cable TV and DTH. As per TRAI's Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Fourth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order, 2010 dated 21st July 2010, as amended on 30.4.2012, which is applicable to digital addressable cable TV, it is mandatory for the service providers to offer all channels (pay and free to air) on a-la-carte basis to subscribers. The said tariff order also provides for protection of consumers against increase in prices. The tariff order further provides that the operators of digital addressable cable TV systems would offer to consumers a Basic-Service-Tier (BST) comprising of minimum 100 free-to-air (FTA) channels at a maximum charge of Rs. 100/- (excluding taxes) per subscriber per month.

With a view to protect the interest of subscribers, the TRAI has also issued Standards of Quality of Service (Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems) Regulation, 2012 and Consumer Complaint Redressal (Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems) Regulations 2012 on 14.5.2012. The Regulations on the Quality of Service prescribe the norms for the connection, disconnection, shifting, transfer of services, timelines for redressal of complaints, billing procedure, set-top-box (STB) related issues and technical parameters to be adhered to by the service providers etc. The Consumer's Complaint Redressal regulations provide for establishing a complaint centre, provision of toll-free number and provision of Nodal officers in cases where the consumer complaints are not redressed to the satisfaction of the complainant.

TRAI has issued the Direct to Home Broadcasting Services (Standards of Quality of Service and Redressal of Grievances) Regulation, 2007, which essentially covers regulatory provisions relating to protection of the interests of DTH subscribers. It is mandatory for the DTH operators to comply with the DTH regulations.