

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:566

ANSWERED ON:07.05.2013

PROMOTION OF FM RADIO SERVICE IN RURAL AREAS

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

- (a) whether the FM channels being operated/promoted by the private companies and by the All India Radio (AIR) are mainly concentrating on urban audience;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has any proposal to promote the FM channels in the rural areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to promote FM channels in the rural areas?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF 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 LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.566 FOR ANSWER ON 07.05.2013.

The FM radio sector was opened to private participation in the year 1999 when the policy for FM Phase-I was announced. Subsequently, the policy guidelines for expansion of FM Radio broadcasting services through private agencies (Phase-II) were announced in 2005. Cities/ Towns with a population of 3 lakh and above, besides State Capitals were taken up for bidding during the first two Phases of FM radio broadcasting. At present 242 channels are operational in 85 cities. While only cities and towns were taken up in these two phases, the coverage area of the transmitters does spillover to nearby rural areas also.

The experience in Phase II suggested that there is considerable untapped potential for future growth in the FM radio sector. Accordingly in Phase-III, besides vacant channels of Phase-II cities/towns, all other cities/towns with a population of above one lakh as per 2001 census, unless they are getting covered by an adjacent cities/towns are proposed to be covered. In addition, 11 cities in border areas of Jammu& Kashmir (J&K) and NE States ( even though they are having the population of less than one lakh) are also included in the list. Under the Policy Guidelines for expansion of FM Radio broadcasting services through private agencies (Phase-III), Government proposes to e-auction 839 such channels in 294 cities/towns. Details of existing and proposed private FM channels are at Annexure-I & Annexure-II respectively.

FM Radio service of All India Radio caters to both urban as well as rural audience. At present, out of 332 FM stations of All India Radio, 301 are functional in the rural areas of the country which cater to the needs of the respective catchment areas. Presently 146 new FM stations of AIR are being setup in the country covering rural areas under schemes approved during 11th Plan, Details are given at Annexure-III. A Scheme for setting up of new FM stations at 137 places in rural areas has also been proposed in the 12th Plan.