

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2288

ANSWERED ON:11.12.2015

Community Radio Stations

Ahmed Shri Sultan ;Chandrakasi Shri M.;Patel Shri Prahlad Singh;Ray Dr. Ravindra Kumar;Reddy Shri Ponguleti Srinivasa;Singh Shri Hukum

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

- (a) the salient features of the Community Radio Stations (CRSs) along with the details of guidelines prepared, criteria fixed, funding provision made available for setting up of CRS;
- (b) the number of CRS functioning in the country, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to set up more CRS in the country, if so, the details thereof along with timeframe fixed for operationalising the same, location and State/UT-wise including West Bengal and Jharkhand;
- (d) whether the Government has taken note that many CRSs are transmitting programmes illegally and if so, the details thereof along with the corrective measures taken/being taken in this regard including review of functioning of CRSs; and
- (e) whether the Government has any proposal for facilitating enhanced role of the State Governments to set up CRSs, if so, the details thereof along with the other steps being taken by the Government to harness the potential of CRSs as an important tool for empowerment of masses?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING [COL.RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) Community Radio Station (CRS) is a low-power radio station operated by the local community/local organisation for development communication. It provides an opportunity to the community to speak about issues concerning their lives. CRS operate on Frequency Modulation (FM), which is easily accessed by people on their radio sets or mobile phones.

Permission to set up CRS is granted in accordance with Policy Guidelines for setting up of CRS in India, which are available on Ministry's website, www.mib.nic.in.

Policy Guidelines for setting up of CRS in India allow setting up of CRS by Not-for-Profit organisations like educational institutions, NGOs/Registered Societies, Trusts and Krishi Vigyan Kendras etc.

CRS permission Holders are eligible to apply for financial assistance on purchase of equipment under the Plan Scheme, "Supporting Community Radio Movement in India". Detailed guidelines for providing financial assistance to CRS are also available on Ministry's website, www.mib.nic.in.

(b) At present 188 CRS are functioning in the country. State/UT-wise details are at Annexure.

(c) Grant of permission to organisations to set up Community Radio Stations is a continuous process. Eligible organizations can apply to set up CRS in any part of the country including West Bengal and Jharkhand. Permission is granted, subject to fulfillment of eligibility criteria and receipt of clearances from Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing of Ministry of Communication & IT, as the case may be.

(d) Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) of 100 CRSs have completed 5 years term, as specified in policy guidelines. A reference was made to TRAI on 8th January 2014 to examine issues arising out of the expiry of the period of GOPA and provide its recommendations to the Ministry. TRAI replied on 23.01.2014 that till recommendations are made, Ministry may renew CRS GOPAs for an interim period. TRAI has submitted its recommendations on renewal of GOPA. Meanwhile Ministry is in the process of renewing GOPAs, pending decision on TRAI recommendations.

Review of the functioning of CRSs is a continuous exercise in the Ministry. Every year, a detailed report about operating CR Stations is brought out in the form of CR Compendium. So far, 5 editions of CR compendiums have been published which are available on Ministry's website www.mib.nic.in. An Inter Ministerial Committee has also been constituted to review the functioning of this sector. This Committee meets regularly and takes stock of the progress made and challenges being faced by the Community Radio Stations.

(e) As per clause 8(ii) of the policy guidelines for setting up of community radio station in India, Central & State Governments can engage community radio stations to broadcast public interest information and sponsored programmes. Ministry has finalised guidelines for sponsored programmes on community radio stations, which are available on Ministry's website, www.mib.nic.in. State Governments can engage with community radio stations on the basis of guidelines issued by the Ministry.

