

(a) what action has been taken by the Ministry on representation for launching of a separate educational channel;

(b) whether the Ministry considers launching such channels, State-wise in regional/State languages and if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) how many proposals have been received from private channel operators to launch a separate educational channel and what action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI): (a) to (c) This Ministry grants permission to companies registered under Companies Act, 1956 under uplinking and downlinking guidelines only in two categories viz. News and Current Affairs TV channel and Non-News and Current Affairs TV channel. No permission is granted under the category of educational channel.

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had sent a proposal to this Ministry for launch of 50 educational DTH channels. Since the said proposal of MHRD does not come under the extant uplinking guidelines, the matter has been referred to a Committee of Secretaries (CoS) which has further recommended to constitute a Group of Secretaries to examine the need for modifications of the extant uplinking guidelines. Meanwhile, the Ministry has made a reference to TRAI on 30.11.2012, *inter-alia* seeking its recommendations as to whether Central Government Ministries and Departments/Central Government owned companies/Central Government Undertakings/Joint venture of the Central Government and the private sector/Central Government funded entities may be allowed to enter into the business of broadcasting and or distribution of TV channels and also whether any change is required to be carried out in any of the extant Rules and Regulations and Guidelines to address the matter suitably.

Transmission of Pakistani channels

2546. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to allow transmission of Pakistani channels in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, along with the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when the decision on transmission of Pakistani channels is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI): (a) to (c) Downlinking Guidelines allow downlinking of foreign channels in India as per the rules/procedure laid out therein. The applications received from the companies are sent for Inter-Ministerial clearances to Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Revenue and Ministry of External Affairs etc. Once all clearances are received and the company complies with the guidelines, permissions are granted. As on date a proposal has been received from a company for downlinking of a channel uplinked from Pakistan by a Lahore based company which is under consideration in consultation with other Ministries.

Cable TV digitisation

†2547. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that cable T.V. digitisation has been completed in the metro cities in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether, following this step of Government, any scheme has been formulated in order to provide any economic relief to the common consumers;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether this scheme provides for freedom to the T.V. viewers of choosing the channels of their own choice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI): (a) and (b) The cable TV digitization was completed in 3 out of the planned 4 metros of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata by the mandated time line of 31st October, 2012. In Chennai the matter is *sub-judice* in the High Court of Madras. A total of 81.07 lakh Set Top Boxes were installed as on 4.12.2012 in four metro cities, registering an achievement of 98% in the Cable TV sector. Taking into consideration the total number of Direct-to-Home subscribers (DTH), the percentage of digitization goes to 99%.

(c) to (e) There is no scheme for providing any economic relief to consumers in the implementation of Digital Addressable System (DAS). However, TRAI in its Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Fourth) (Addressable Systems)

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.