

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO07.03.2011
ANSWERED ON
ILLEGAL BROADCAST OF FOREIGN CHANNELS

142

Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy

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

- (a) whether Government has recently decided to amend the laws covering illegal broadcast of foreign channels, such as Press TV, Peace TV and Q TV;
- (b) if so, whether illegal broadcast of foreign channels has generated serious concerns among security agencies;
- (c) if so, whether Government proposes to take firm steps to crack down on such illegal channels; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

(SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 142 FOR ANSWER ON 07.03.2011.

(a) to (d) The Ministry is in the process of bringing about certain amendments in the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 (hereinafter referred to as "Cable Act") to address the problem of illegal broadcast of foreign channels. The issue of carriage of illegal satellite TV channels by cable operators has been a matter of concern for the Government for quite some time. Security agencies had identified a list of 25 such channels and observed that the contents of some of these channels are not conducive to the security environment in the country and pose a potential security hazard. The matter was accordingly considered by the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) which deliberated on the various options for curbing this problem. Since the action against cable operators who are indulging in illegal transmission of channels is to be taken by the Authorized Officers of the State Governments as per the Cable Act, it was felt by CoS that there is an imperative need to make the provisions in the Cable Act more stringent and deterrent to prevent illegal carriage. Accordingly, the CoS suggested incorporating amendments in the Act which include making the existing penal provisions more stringent by making transmission of illegal channels a cognizable offence and enhancing existing financial penalties in the Act to discourage cable operators from transmitting illegal channels. It is proposed to introduce a Bill to this effect in Parliament, after the approval of the Cabinet. Further, for better enforcement of the Cable Act, the Ministry has circulated detailed guidelines to the States for setting up of State and District level Monitoring Committees to monitor the content transmitted by cable operators. These Committees, comprising various cross sections of the society, are intended to aid and advise the Authorized Officers to ensure compliance of the provisions of the Cable Act and the Rules thereunder. The Ministry has been following up with the State Government for constitution of these Committees. As of now, only 10 States/UTs have formed the State level Committees, and District level Committees have been constituted in 110 districts out of 626 districts in the country.