

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3992
(TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.03.2021)

CIRCULATION OF RADIO SERVICE

3992. SHRI B.Y. RAGHAVENDRA:

SHRI D.K. SURESH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that radio is a very important tool of communication and if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;**

- (b) whether the Government has taken note that radio proves to be an effective medium to keep the language alive in the vast country like India and if so, the details thereof; and**

- (c) the measures being taken by the Government to increase the circulation of radio services in the country?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE;
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF
HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI PRAKASH
JAVADEKAR)**

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. Radio is a powerful tool to connect to the masses. It is also a platform for linkage and exchange between policy makers, government bodies and the public. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi reaches out to the citizens of India through Mann ki Baat on All India Radio (AIR), which reaches 99.20% of population spread over 92.00% of geographical area of the country.

AIR broadcasts programmes in all major regional languages and various dialects. At present, 46 Regional News Units of AIR broadcast programmes in 23 major languages and 181 dialects.

Further, there are 386 Private FM Radio channels operating from 111 cities in the country spread across 26 States and 4 Union Territories, under the Private FM Radio Phase III Policy. Private FM Radio promotes local language by the radio jockeys speaking in the local language and dialects of that city and also promotes local content.

Community Radio is the third tier in radio broadcasting, distinct from public service and commercial media, providing a platform to air local voices among the local community on issues concerning their lives. Community Radio Station (CRS) is essentially low power radio station meant to be set up and operated by the local communities to focus on local issues concerning health, nutrition, education, agriculture etc. Thus, the Community Radio is a very important tool of communication for broadcasting programmes in local language and dialects, especially for those areas where presence of mainstream media is limited.

(c) The Government has taken various measures to increase the reach of radio services in the country. All AIR services have an active social media presence. Content broadcast on AIR services is also being made available for on-demand listening through YouTube. For the first time, Visual Radio programming has been introduced where Radio Programs such as Live Commentary are also being live streamed with a camera in the studio so that the faces behind the voices can be seen and experienced. More than 40 AIR Services have been made available via Satellite Radio on “DD Free Dish” DTH platform. Also, 200 AIR Services are being live streamed through “NewsOnAir” App for listening anywhere in the world. Further Digital Radio standards are being evaluated to enhance the technology and to increase the capacity for multiple services.

The Private FM Radio Phase-III Policy provides for radio coverage in all cities with population above 1 lakh, unless getting covered from a neighbouring city. In addition, 11 cities in border areas of North East States and Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh having population of less than 1 lakh have also been included. The Phase-III policy provides for conducting e-auctions in batches for granting permission to private agencies. Government has conducted two batches of e-auctions wherein 163 FM Radio Channels have been awarded.

Setting up of Community Radio Stations (CRS) is a voluntary effort, by voluntary organizations, educational institutions, State Agricultural Universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras. The Government, has also taken measures to increase Community Radio service in the country by conducting awareness workshops, from time to time, to encourage eligible organizations for setting up of CRS, especially in Community Radio dark areas; and engagement with Coastal States/UTs, Aspirational Districts and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to identify and persuade eligible organizations for setting up of CRS, especially in those areas where no CRS is presently operational.
