

13

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2024-25)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

**[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the
Committee contained in their Third Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands
for Grants (2024-25)']**

THIRTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

July, 2025/ Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 24.07.2025

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 24.07.2025



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

July 2025/ Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(v)
CHAPTER I Report.....	1
CHAPTER II Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.....	10
CHAPTER III Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government.....	27
CHAPTER IV Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration	28
CHAPTER V Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are of interim in nature.....	29

APPENDICES

I.	Revised Policy Guidelines for setting up Community Radio Stations in India	35
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ANNEXURES

I.	Minutes of the 20 th Sitting of the Committee held on 26.06.2025.....	42
II.	Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in their Third Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha).	44

**Composition of the Standing Committee on Communications and
Information Technology (2024-25)****

**Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson
Lok Sabha**

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Shri Anil Baluni
4. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
5. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
6. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer
7. Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav
8. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
9. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
10. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
11. Ms. Mahua Moitra
12. Shri G. Kumar Naik
13. Shri Shafi Parambil
14. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
15. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
16. Shri Radheshyam Rathiya
17. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
18. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
19. Shri Devesh Shakya
20. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
21. Shri Rajesh Verma

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Saket Gokhale*
23. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
24. Shri Ilaiyaraaja
25. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
26. Dr. Sasmit Patra
27. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
28. Shri S. Niranjan Reddy
29. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
30. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
31. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | — | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | — | Director |
| 3. | Smt. Rinky Singh | — | Executive Officer |

****Committee constituted w.e.f. 26th September, 2024 vide Para No.833 of Bulletin Part-II dated 26th September, 2024.**

*** Shri Saket Gokhale has been nominated vide Para No. 853 of Bulletin Part –II dated 03rd October, 2024.**

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25), having been authorized by the Committee, present this Thirteenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Third Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

2. The Third Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 2024. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting furnished their Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Third Report on 30th March, 2025.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 26th June, 2025.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold in Chapter-I of the Report.

5. An analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Third Report of the Committee is given at Annexure-II.

**NEW DELHI;
21 July, 2025**

30 Asadha, 1947 (Saka)

**DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology.**

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Third Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on the 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

2. The Third Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 2024. It contained 16 Observations/Recommendations. Action Taken Notes contained in the Report in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and are categorized as under:-

(i)	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government Rec. Sl. Nos.:– 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,13,14 & 15	
		Total-10 Chapter-II
(ii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government Rec. Sl. No.:– NIL	
		Total — NIL Chapter-III
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration Rec. Sl. No.:– NIL	
		Total – NIL Chapter-IV
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are of interim in nature Rec. Sl. No.:– 4,9,10,11,12 &16	
		Total – 06 Chapter-V

3. The Committee trust that utmost importance would be given for the implementation of the Observations/Recommendations accepted by the Government. The Committee further desire that Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report and final action taken replies to the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report would be furnished at the earliest.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

DIGITIZATION OF ARCHIVES OF DOORDARSHAN (DD)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

5. The Committee, in their Third Report, had recommended as under:-

“The Ministry informed the Committee that all the DD channels are digitized and all possible efforts are being made to complete the remaining digitization at the earliest. The Ministry also submitted before the Committee that the archival content of public interest is being showcased through Social Media platforms like YouTube. The interested persons can approach Central Archives through email in order to purchase the recordings/media under the ambit of various archival policies. Information to this effect has been made public on Prasar Bharati website. Regarding archives of DD, the Ministry submitted that the archives have been digitised to the extent possible and efforts are being made to complete the remaining digitisation at the earliest. The Committee have long been demanding that all archives of DD may be digitized at the earliest. However, the process of digitization is still incomplete. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should expedite the process of digitization of all DD archives without any further delay so that archival contents are available to public for use. The Committee learn that social media platforms are being used to showcase the archival contents which are of public interest. The Committee wish to know what steps have been taken by the Ministry to take it to those sections of the society who are not using social media but are interested in watching these contents”.

6. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of information and Broadcasting submitted as under:-

“In addition to linear TV transmission, Doordarshan Channels are now being integrated in Prasar Bharati Over-The-Top (OTT) platform WAVES. Programmes telecast by regional/State channels of North-East region can be viewed by viewers through various modes like DTH platform, Cable TV Network and OTT.

Digitization of Archives of Doordarshan, a. Digitization setup at Prasar Bharati:

1. Prasar Bharati Archives have been set up to ensure digitization and preservation of Media Assets produced for the broadcast purposes/operations by Akashvani and Doordarshan.
2. All the content at Prasar Bharati Archives have been digitized
3. AIR & DD Kendras have been provided with requisite hardware & software facility to digitize and preserve the content at their level.
4. To further strengthen digitization and archival setup, suitable provision has been requested under BIND scheme.
5. The process of digitization of remaining media available at Kendra level shall be taken up in time bound manner.

b. Accessibility of archival content to the public:

1. Archival Content is curated and sent to Akashvani and Doordarshan Kendras for making it available to the public through linear broadcasting. The content is consumed by the section of society, not available on social media and digital platform.
2. Prasar Bharati has launched OTT platform “WAVES”, wherein archival content of Akashvani and Doordarshan is made available in digital mode for public free of cost. Content from other Ministries have also been published on the platform in order to make the public aware of schemes and initiatives taken by Govt. of India.
3. Content of public interest is being curated and made available to the masses through YouTube channels and other Social Media platforms”.

7. **The Committee (2024-25), in their Third Report, had recommended to expedite the process of digitization of all DD archives so that archival contents are available to public for use. The Ministry, in their Action Taken Note, have informed that in addition to linear TV transmission, Doordarshan Channels are now being integrated in Prasar Bharati Over-The-Top (OTT) platform WAVES and programmes telecast by regional/State channels of North-East region can be viewed by viewers through various modes like DTH platform, Cable TV Network and OTT platform. Besides, Prasar Bharati Archives have been set up to ensure digitization and preservation of Media Assets produced for the broadcast purposes/operations by Akashvani and Doordarshan. The Ministry has also stated that all the content at Prasar Bharati Archives have been digitized and the process of digitization of remaining media available at Kendra level shall be taken up in a time bound manner. While appreciating the launch of OTT platform ‘WAVES’, wherein archival content of Akashvani and Doordarshan is being made available in digital mode for public, free of cost, the Committee call upon the Ministry to take initiatives to popularize their OTT platform (WAVES) for greater reach among the masses. Further, the Committee, while noting that all the content at Prasar Bharati Archives have been digitized, would like the Ministry to set a time frame for early completion of digitization process for remaining media available at Kendra level and apprise them of the same.**

ADULT CONTENT ON OTT PLATFORMS

(Recommendation Sl. No. 14)

8. The Committee, in their Original Report, made the following Observation/Recommendation:—

“The Ministry informed the Committee that Part III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000 relates to publishers of online curated content, commonly known as OTT platforms. It was further submitted that OTT platforms providing access to content which has an “A” rating shall take all efforts to restrict access to such content by a child through the implementation of appropriate access control measures and in March 2024, the Ministry had taken action to block 18 OTT platforms publishing obscene, and, in some instances, pornographic content. 19 websites, 10 apps (7 on Google Play Store, 3 on Apple App Store), and 57 social media accounts associated with these platforms were disabled for public access in India. In view of the above information, the Committee harps upon the point that Ministry may furnish the details of preventive measures adopted by them so that the pervasion of restricted content among children be stopped. The Committee would also like to know if such content blocked by the Ministry on 18 OTT, 19 websites and 10 apps are easily available on social media and other media platforms like Telegram Channel. If so, the Committee may be apprised of how this situation could be dealt with. The Committee would further like to know whether the existing Legal Framework is ample enough to deal with this issue or more stringent laws are required to deal with this issue especially in view of the latest technologies in the field. The Committee may be informed of the contemplated action by the Ministry in this regard. The Committee would like to advise the Ministry that provision for some sort of deterrent punishment should be put in place for the repeated offenders in this regard. The Committee would also like to know whether the OTT platforms committing the same mistake under the guise of changing the name of programmes, changing the means of dissemination and changing the IP address etc., with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are strictly dealt with. The Committee would like to be apprised of the details in this regard”.

9. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:-

"Code of Ethics prescribed under part-III of IT Rules, 2021 provides for publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) which, inter alia, require the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force and to undertake age-based classification of content into 5 categories, based on general guidelines provided in the Appendix to the Rules. The Schedule prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021 inter-alia provides for the following sets of guidelines for Classification of any curated content namely 'Context', 'Theme' and 'Tone and impact'. Theme: Classification decisions may take into the theme of any content but will depend significantly on the treatment of that theme, especially the sensitivity of its presentation. The most challenging themes (for example,

drug misuse, violence, pedophilia, sex, racial or communal hatred or violence etc.) are unlikely to be appropriate at the junior levels of classification.

Part-II of the Schedule prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021 provides for the Issue Related Guidelines.

(a) Discrimination: The categorical classification of content shall take into account the impact of a film on matters such as caste, race, gender, religion, disability or sexuality that may arise in a wide range of works, and the classification decision will take account of the strength or impact of their inclusion.

(b) Psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking and tobacco: Films or serials, etc. that as a whole portray misuse of psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking and tobacco would qualify for a higher category of classification.

(c) Imitable behaviour:

(1) Classification decisions may take into account any portrayal of criminal and violent behaviour with weapons.

(2) Portrayal of potentially dangerous behaviour that are likely to incite the commission of any offence (including suicide, and infliction of self-harm) and that children and young people may potentially copy, shall receive a higher classification.

(3) Films or serials with song and dance scenes comprising lyrics and gestures that have sexual innuendos would receive a higher classification.

Provision under part-III of IT Rules, 2021 to restrict certain curated content by a child

Display of Classification:

- The publisher of online curated content making available content that is classified as U/A 13+ or higher shall ensure that access control mechanisms, including parental locks, are made available for such content.

- A publisher of online curated content which makes available content or programme that is classified as "A" shall implement a reliable age verification mechanism for viewership of such content.

- Restriction of access to certain curated content by a child: Every publisher of online curated content providing access to online curated content which has an "A" rating shall take all efforts to restrict access to such content by a child through the implementation of appropriate access control measures.

2. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, on 19.02.2025, issued advisory to Online Curated Content Publishers (OTT Platforms) on adherence of Indian Laws and the Code of Ethics prescribed under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

3. While the Ministry took action to block 18 OTT Platforms publishing obscene content, the copies of the same was also marked to Delhi Police for appropriate action regarding unlawful content being published.

4. The Ministry has received various grievances through multiple channels that the platforms blocked by it are still operating by changing name or IP address and the Ministry is reviewing the same for appropriate action on such platforms.

5. Further, Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting while replying to Lok Sabha Starred Question #21 on 27.11.2024 has stressed on the need for strengthening the editorial checks in respect of the content

being published on social media and OTT platforms. It was mentioned that such editorial checks which used to be there in the past are no more there in the era of social media and OTT platforms, leading to freedom of speech being misused to spread vulgar content on OTT platforms and fake news on social media. The Hon'ble Minister stated that there is a need to make the existing laws more stringent, and for this purpose there is a need for building a societal consensus, suggesting that this issue could be considered by the Parliamentary Committees.”.

10. **The Committee (2024-25), had asked the Ministry to furnish details of preventive measures adopted to stop the pervasion of restricted content among children and had desired to know if the contents blocked by the Ministry were easily available on social media and other media platforms like Telegram Channel. The Committee had also desired to know whether the existing Legal Framework was enough to deal with this issue especially in view of the latest technologies. The Ministry, in their Action Taken Note, informed that the Code of Ethics prescribed under part-III of IT Rules, 2021 provides for publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) which, *inter-alia*, requires the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force and to undertake age-based classification of content into 5 categories. The Ministry also shared details about Part-II of the Schedule prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021, which stipulates guidelines to deal with discrimination/Psychotropic substances/liquor/smoking/tobacco/imitable behavior and about Part-III of IT Rules, 2021, which contains provisions for ‘Restriction of access to certain curated content by a child’. The Committee note that the Ministry, on 19.02.2025, had also issued advisory to Online Curated Content Publishers (OTT Platforms) about the need for adherence of Indian Laws and the Code of Ethics prescribed under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. Further, action has also been taken to block 18 OTT Platforms publishing obscene content and the copies of the same marked to Delhi Police for appropriate action. Grievances regarding the blocked platforms being still operational by changing name or IP address are also being reviewed for appropriate action. Further, it has been informed that the Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting while replying to Lok Sabha Starred Question #21 on 27.11.2024 had stressed on the need for strengthening the editorial checks in respect of the content being published on social media and OTT platforms. He had also stated that there was a need to make the existing laws more stringent and for this purpose, a societal consensus is to be built and suggested that this issue**

could be considered by the Parliamentary Committees.

The Committee, while taking note of the aforesaid provisions of 'IT Rules, 2021' to deal with erring publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms), desire to be updated about: (i) Number of pending grievances and action taken by the Ministry and Delhi Police against OTT platforms that are blocked but still operating by change of name or IP address; and (ii) Action Taken by the Ministry consequent upon Honorable Minister's reply to a Parliamentary Questions highlighting the need for strengthening the existing law/editorial checks in respect of the content being published on social media and OTT platforms. While the issue is under its active consideration, the Committee would like to be enlightened as to whether the Ministry have taken up the same with Editorial Boards of OTT platforms to prevent misuse of speech, spreading/proliferating vulgar content and fake news etc.

OVERHAULING OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS (CRSs)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 15)

11. The Committee, in their Original Report, made the following Observation/Recommendation:—

"The Committee learn that for CRSs in 2022-23, the percentage of Actual Expenditure in respect of Budget Estimate was 52.08% while in respect of Revised Estimate, it was 66.66% and these figures in 2023-24 reached up to 84.80% for Budget Estimate and Revised Estimate. The Committee note that the Ministry have failed consistently over the years to utilize the entire fund allocated to them in CRSs. The Committee would like to know the reasons for the same and advise them to take appropriate corrective steps to address the issues which are responsible for surrender of funds and ensure optimum utilization of allocated funds.

The Committee were also explained by the Ministry that a total number of 29 applications for Community Radio Stations are pending with the Ministry, which are at various stages of processing for grant of permission for setting up of Community Radio Stations. The Committee would like to know the reasons for pendency of these 29 applications and also advise the Ministry to prepare a proper Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to deal with such requests in future so that time lag could be minimized".

12. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:—

" The major reasons of underutilization of funds and road map to increase the utilization of funds are listed below:-

a) One of the components of the Scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Community Radio (which is demand driven completely). The Community Radio Stations submit their cases for financial assistance (after minimum three months of functioning) for the expenditure incurred

by them on setting up Community Radio Station as per policy/guidelines. Thus, utilization depends upon the demand submitted by the CRS also. Ministry is approaching to all the operating CRs to make them aware of this scheme through all possible means emails, social media, and conducting conferences and workshops.

b) Ministry has also taken several steps for strengthening the Community Radio Movement and also to increase the utilization of funds. The amount of financial assistance given to a Community Radio Station has also been increased from Rs. 10 Lakhs to an amount varying from Rs. 16.20 Lakhs to Rs. 24 Lakhs as per eligibility by its revised policy dated 23.09.2024. The incentives have been also provided for use of Green Energy and women participation in revised policy. In addition to this, to facilitate research, innovation and skilling in the sector, the Government of India have launched fellowship programmes and internship programmes under the Scheme.

c) During last two financial years conferences were also being organized in the Virtual Mode which also led to saving of the funds. However, in this year physical workshops and conferences were planned and organized to increase the awareness and capacity building.

d) Ministry is planning to shift on purely online mode for granting permission to set up community radio through Broadcast Seva Portal like signing of LoI and upgrading to better monitoring and analysis to reduce delay in each step. The other measures like conducting in-house trainings to Standardize/uniform handling of application, frequent interaction with applicants to reduce delay. These measures are important as increasing the numbers of operational Community Radio and speedy finalization of applications has a direct relationship with utilization of funds. However, as per the guidelines, the applications are required to be cleared from MHA, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Ministry of Communications. It is pertinent to mention that after obtaining LOI, applicant applies to Ministry of Communication for Wireless Operating License before commissioning the CRS. The License for operating CRS is issued by the Ministry of Communication, but sometimes the clearance from WPC/ MHA/MOD takes time.

a. The Status of the applications is given in the tabular format as Annexure-I.

b. Every application received through Broadcast Seva Portal has to pass through broadly four stages as per Para 3 of Guidelines (available on <https://mib.gov.in> and placed at Annexure-II)

i. Initial Verification of documents/proofs submitted by applicants through portal takes one Month but substantial numbers of applications are being received with inaccurate/mismatched data/documents/proof, then application returned (online) for clarification& correction, so delay happens in such cases.

ii. Forward the application to WPC, MHA, MOD for clearances and time specified in guidelines is 3 months. However, only WPC Clearance is required in the cases of Government entities.

iii. 3rd Stage is (a) Conducting Screening Committee (SCM) for the NPOs case, which got all clearances from concerned Ministry (b) Inter-Ministerial Committee approve/reject the cases of NPOs cleared by SCM

but in case of Government entities like Central/Army Schools or Universities directly taken at IMC bypassing SCM. Then LoI is issued to successful applicant which files for DL/SACFA through online portal.

iv. 4th and Final Stage: Once cleared stage 3, applicant approach MIB for signing of Grant of Permission Agreement (GoPA). After clearing all stages applicant can install and commission the community Radio.

c. The SoP mentioned above steps are very clear and transparent (Para 3 of Revised Policy Guidelines for setting up Community Radio Stations in India dated 13.02.2024 (available on <https://mib.gov.in> and attached as Annexure-II)".

13. In their Original Report, the Committee had sought reasons from the Ministry for consistent under-utilization of funds allocated to Community Radio Stations (CRSs) as well as to take appropriate corrective steps to address the issue. The Committee had also desired to know the reasons for the pendency of 29 applications for CRSs and had advised the Ministry to prepare a proper Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for minimizing the time lag. According to the Action Taken Note of the Ministry, it has been observed that one of the components of the Scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Community Radio (which is demand driven completely) and the Community Radio Stations (CRSs) submit their cases for financial assistance (after minimum three months of functioning) for the expenditure incurred by them in setting up Community Radio Station as per policy/guidelines. Thus, utilization depends upon the demand submitted by the CRS also. The Ministry has submitted that for this, they are approaching all the operating CRSs to make them aware of this Scheme. Further, they have also taken several steps for strengthening the Community Radio Movement and to increase the utilization of funds. While hoping that the steps taken by the Ministry would bring out the intended outcome, the Committee desire to be apprised of the final result of the aforesaid initiatives so as to ensure optimum utilization of allotted funds.

Further, with respect to pendency of applications for CRSs, the Committee note that the Ministry is planning to shift to purely online mode for granting permission to set up Community Radio through Broadcast Seva Portal. The Action Taken Note states that every application received through Broadcast Seva Portal has to pass through broadly four stages as per Para 3 of Guidelines [Revised Policy Guidelines for setting up Community Radio Stations in India dated 13.02.2024 - Appendix-I]. On the issue of pending applications for CRSs, the Committee recall their observation [Rec. No. 8 made in their 11th Report on DFG (2025-26) of MIB] that there were 77 applications pending during the financial year

2024-25 which indicates an increasing trend of pendency from the previous year. The Committee hope that the action taken by the Ministry to shift to online mode for granting permission for setting up of CRSs, would reduce the pendency of applications. As per the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's reply, one of the reasons for delay in granting permission to set up Community Radio Station is the time taken to get clearances from Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC)/Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)/Ministry of Defence (MoD). The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to have a common portal/website with them so that they can observe the cause of delay and accordingly reduce the delay in granting permission to set up Community Radio Stations. The Committee desire to be kept apprised about the outcome of all the initiatives taken to reduce the pendency along with the updated number of the applications pending for CRSs. The Committee also hope that proper impact assessment of this movement is periodically done by the Ministry to gauge its impact and address the challenges, if any, in order to achieve its objective of community empowerment, development and social change.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation Sl. No. 1)

BUDGET OVERVIEW AND DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2024-25)

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is the focal point regarding policy matters relating to private broadcasting, administering the public broadcasting service (Prasar Bharati), multimedia advertising and publicity of the policies and programmes of the Government of India, film promotion and certification and regulation of print and digital media. The Ministry also handles the task of disseminating information about Government policies, schemes and programmes through different media vehicles. It plays a pivotal role in dissemination and free flow of information via radio, television, films, press and print publications, digital and social media, posters, advertising, and traditional modes of communication such as dance, drama, folk recitals, puppet shows. The expenditure of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and its attached/sub-ordinate offices and autonomous/grantee bodies, including Prasar Bharati is covered under Demand No. 61. For the Financial Year 2024-25, an amount of Rs. 4342.55 crore has been identified for MIB at the Budget Estimate stage as against the proposed sum of Rs. 5017.64 crore. During the year 2023-24, the allocations at Budget Estimate (BE) and Revised Estimate (RE) stages were Rs. 4692.00 crore and Rs. 4449.76 crore respectively and the actual utilization was Rs. 4314.24 crore which is 96.95% of RE allocation. The Committee appreciate the fact that for the last few years the overall trend of actual expenditure has been above 90 percent of the allocations made at RE stage and expect the same trend will be continued during 2024-25.

Reply of the Government

Budget allocation for the Ministry for FY 2024-25 is ₹4342.55 crore and as per the analysis of requirement, Ministry of Finance agreed to increase the allocation in Revised Estimates for 2024-25 as ₹4626.71 crore. Expenditure as on 28.03.2025 is ₹ 4270.43 crore against the Final allocation i.e. ₹4265.69 crore.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 2)

The Committee, in their Third Report, had recommended as under:-

For the Financial Year 2024-25, as against the proposed amount of Rs. 5017.64 crore, the Ministry at BE stage received Rs. 4342.55 crore which is approximately Rs. 700 crore lesser than the proposed amount. Out of this amount, Rs. 566.41 crore has been earmarked for the 'Establishment Expenditure of the Centre' against the proposed sum of Rs. 640.80 crore; Rs. 1004.31 crore has been allotted for the 'Central Sector Schemes' against the proposed amount of Rs. 1576.24 crore and Rs. 2771.83 crore is allotted for 'Other Central Expenditure [including those on Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and Autonomous Bodies] against the proposed sum of Rs. 2800.60 crore. The Committee observe that the Ministry has been able to utilize more than 95

percent of RE allocation in all the three categories during the Financial Year 2023-24, which the Committee find as a healthy trend and believe that this trend would be repeated during current Financial Year also. The Ministry submitted that with advent of new forms of media, the requirement of Budget and funds dissemination has expanded hugely but the Ministry has not been able to get adequate funds for it.

The Committee have been assured by the Ministry that efforts would be made to utilize the allocated funds from the commencement of financial year itself and the Monitoring mechanism has been strengthened and review of progress of projects is taken up periodically. The Committee were informed that budgetary expenditure has been meticulously and categorically planned. Prasar Bharati has adopted digital techniques for prudent use of funds making it more efficient and transparent.

The Committee further note that for three Central Sector Schemes;

(i) Development Communication and Dissemination of Filmic Content; (ii) Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND); and (iii) Supporting Community Radio Movement in India, there has been under-utilisation of funds during the financial year 2023-24 to the extent that the actual expenditure for these schemes were 97.10 per cent, 72.71 per cent, and 84.80 per cent respectively of the Revised Estimate allocation. In light of this observation, the Committee may be apprised of the roadmap for effective and optimum utilisation of funds during financial year 2024-25. The Committee would also like to know how the reduced allocation of Rs. 571 crore under Central Sector Schemes of the Ministry during financial year 2024-25 will affect their schemes/plans.

The Ministry informed the Committee that they have exhausted their funds for the schemes which will not last for more than two years and approached the Finance Department. The Ministry have further submitted that certain new schemes related to information dissemination in Digital Media and Social Media are in pipeline, for which a Revised Allocation of Budget would be proposed. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry may approach the Ministry of Finance seeking additional funds at RE stage to meet additional expenditure for these schemes as well as for other scheme i.e. 'Other Central Expenditure including those on Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and Autonomous Bodies', 'Central Sector Schemes' and 'Establishment Expenditure of the Centre' so that these schemes do not suffer for want of funds and apprise them the results accordingly.

The Committee also note that as per decision taken in the Ministry, separate budget line entry has been created for Principal Accounts Office from financial year 2024-2025 onwards, which was earlier, included in the allocation of main Secretariat till financial year 2023-2024. The Committee may be enlightened about the rationale behind this decision".

Reply of the Government

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of information and Broadcasting submitted as under:—

"Various efforts made for optimum utilization of funds allocated under various schemes of MIB are as follows -

- Monitoring mechanism is strengthened and review of progress of projects is taken up periodically.
- The forecast of the budget expenditure was done meticulously to arrive at the correct requirement of the budget. GFR provisions are followed for the expenditure incurred to ensure correct utilization of the budget.

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been reviewing the expenditure of Prasar Bharati periodically and Prasar Bharati has been advised to regularly review the projects through an annual action plan to be undertaken and monitored at least on a monthly basis both from physical and financial progress point of view. The progress of expenditure is also being monitored closely at the senior officer levels.

- Prasar Bharati has adopted digital techniques in office functioning such as e-office, email, CAS (Centralized Accounting Software) and TSA for fund release for the scheme. These have made the system fast, efficient and transparent.

- A comprehensive content procurement policy has been approved by Prasar Bharati which clearly defines the processes and guidelines for procurement of content under different procurement models.

- Further, multiple new policies have been approved by Prasar Bharati Board (PBB) to streamline content procurement as mentioned below:

- i. Policy Guidelines for Commissioning of Programmes under DAP (Direct Assignment Process) and an Online Portal has been launched for the same

- ii. Policy Guidelines for acquisition of Licensed Ready-Made Audio-Visual Content and an Online Portal has been launched for the same

- iii. Policy for Procurement of Feature Films for Prasar Bharati Platforms on Fixed License Fee - 2021

Proposed budget allocation for the Ministry for financial year 2024-25 for its schemes was ₹1576.24 crore and revised to ₹1004.31 crore with a reduction of ₹571.93 crore based on the analysis of expenditure. Expenditure under these schemes is ₹670.26 crore as on 28.03.2025.

Budget allocation for the Ministry for FY 2024-25 is ₹4342.55 crore and as per the analysis of requirement, Ministry of Finance agreed to increase the allocation in Revised Estimates for 2024-25 as ₹4626.71 crore. Expenditure as on 28.03.2025 is ₹ 4270.43 crore against the Final allocation i.e. ₹4265.69 crore.

To improve operational efficiency, better disclosure, financial independence and accounting setup in Principal Accounts office of this Ministry. Similar practices are being followed in most of the other Ministries. Some of the Ministries are M/o Health and Family Welfare, M/o Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, M/o Labour and Employment and Department of Youth Affairs”.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 3)

The Committee have been informed that the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) earlier known as the Bureau of Outreach and Communication was formed in 2017 by integration of the erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Song & Drama Division (S&DD) with the aim to provide 360-degree communication solutions to the Ministries/Departments/ Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/autonomous bodies of the Government of India and engage in informing people, both rural and urban, about the Government's policies and programmes to enhance their participation in developmental activities. The Committee have been apprised that for the Financial Year 2024-25, the RE for CBC is Rs. 192.67 crore which has been granted against the BE of Rs. 200.11 crore, whereas the actual

expenditure till 12.09.2024 stands at Rs. 90.19 crore only. The Committee would like to know the action plan for utilization of Rs. 110 crore (approx.) by the Ministry in the remaining period of the financial year and recommend making sincere efforts to ensure optimal utilization of balance funds. The Committee would also like to know whether the integration of DAVP, DFP and S&DD into one unit i.e, CBC has yielded the desired results with better functionality and has eventually proved to be a cost saving measure. The Committee also emphasise that the funds allocated may be utilised judiciously and optimally.

Reply of the Government

CBC has ensured the optimal utilization of funds. The Establishment Expenditure of CBC as on 23.03.2025 vis-à-vis Final Grant 2024-25 is tabulated below which indicates that the approx. 96.16% funds have been utilized.

(Rs. in crores)

Establishment	BE 2024-25	RE 2024-25	FG 2024-25	Expenditure as on 23.03.2025	% of expenditure over FG 2024-25
Central Bureau of Communication (CBC)	200.11	192.75	193.37	185.96	96.16

Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) was created in December, 2017 by integrating the erstwhile Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) and Song and Drama Division (S&DD). After this integration 23 Regional Offices (ROs) and 148 Field Offices (FO) were created to put in place mechanism for clearly defined control and regulating mechanism for pooling of resources and efficient execution of campaigns by CBC at regional and local level as per requirement. After integration, CBC is able to carry the information and awareness campaigns about the policies and programmes of the Government more efficiently at regional and field levels and this has helped the Government in ensuring enhanced participation of people in development and welfare activities of the Government.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 5)

EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

Even though, the Ministry had proposed Rs. 5017.64 crore under the Budget Estimate, they were allocated Rs. 4342.00 Cr. for the financial year 2024-25, which is Rs. 675.64 crore lesser than the amount sought. The Ministry in the thrust areas has highlighted on Artificial Intelligence (AI) based communication hub; overhauling of IIMC; formulation of National Policy for the growth of AVGC-XR in the country; and Promotion of Ease of Filming through India Cine Hub (ICH) portal among others. The Ministry informed the Committee about reviewing the expenditure of Prasar Bharati periodically and Prasar Bharati has been advised to regularly review the projects through an annual action plan and monitored at least on a monthly basis both from physical and financial progress point of view. The progress of expenditure is also being monitored closely at the senior officer levels. The Committee are given to understand that the Ministry have to utilize the funds judiciously to meet the targets fixed for thrust areas. The thrust areas

enumerated by the Ministry are mostly technology driven which would require man power with specialized skills. The Committee while observing that Prasar Bharati is facing a huge challenge in engaging technical staff due to paucity of funds for its day-to-day programmes and functioning are a bit apprehensive about the shortage of manpower to handle the thrust areas. The Committee would, therefore, like to know about the action plan drawn by the Ministry to achieve desired results in these thrust areas in the absence of technically qualified personnel.

The Committee also urge the Ministry to ensure judicious utilisation of their resources and its output which should not suffer due to lack of funds.

Reply of the Government

Artificial Intelligence

All the manpower required for various components of Artificial Intelligence driven communication hub at New Media Wing will be engaged on outsourcing basis through an agency. Therefore, no shortage of manpower is envisaged

IIMC

Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) was converted into Deemed to be university under distinct category. Two master degree courses (MA in Media Business Studies and MA in Strategic Communication) were launched in the academic session 2024-25. Construction of Additional academic and administrative block at IIMC, Delhi and campus at IIMC, Amravati by CPWD is under process. New equipments have been provided at all campuses in the financial year 2024-25. New master degree program in New Media will be started from academic session 25-26 at Delhi, Aizawl, Jammu and Kottayam campuses. 20 teaching posts have advertised and filling of posts is under process.

IIMC offers specialised courses. Industry leaders and media professionals are invited for guest lectures. Master classes/ Workshops are conducted on emerging trends like crisis communication, digital marketing, AI in media and collaborate with industry in media campaign planning.

Indian Cine Hub

The Ease of Filming through India Cine Hub (ICH) Portal has been a key initiative to streamline the film production process in India. As part of this effort, the FFO web portal (<https://ffo.gov.in/en>) was originally launched as India's single-window clearance and facilitation mechanism for both international and domestic filmmakers.

To improve accessibility and usability, the portal was revamped and relaunched as indiacinehub.gov.in in November 2024. The revamped India Cine Hub portal features a modern, intuitive design and a user-friendly interface.

Notable features of the portal are as follows :

- a. **Easy application for filming permissions** – The portal is integrated with permission portals of various states, union territories, and central agencies such as Railways and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- b. **Online application for incentives** – Filmmakers can apply for government incentives directly through the platform.
- c. **Incentive Final Disbursal Module-** Enables applicants to file all necessary permissions and documentation required for the final disbursal of approved incentives

through a single interface. Document Verification Workflow Further Incorporates automated checks for completeness and compliance, reducing delays caused by missing or incorrect documentation.

d. **Real-Time Application Tracking:** Provides applicants with status updates and progress tracking for their disbursement applications.

e. **Integrated Communication Channels:** Facilitates direct communication between applicants and authorities for resolving queries and expediting the approval process.

f. **Repository of filmic and non-filmic resources** – A comprehensive database of locations, facilities, and industry contacts is available to aid filmmakers

g. **Crowdsourcing facility** – Users can contribute and update information on filmic and non-filmic resources, enhancing the database's accuracy and reach. The Ministry is working towards further refining the portal's capabilities and ensure seamless service delivery.

h. **Incentive Calculator-** Provides a user-friendly interface for filmmakers to input project details and receive tailored estimates of potential incentives based on policies and eligibility criteria. **Scenario Simulation** which further allows users to simulate multiple scenarios by altering key parameters, enables informed decision-making during project planning.

Projects like AI Chatbox Integration, GIS Based location Compendium and intuitive search on the portal using AI/ Machine Learning are in the pipeline.

National Policy for the growth of AVGC-XR

The Union Cabinet had approved the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) now known as Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT). The IICT is being set up with a one-time budgetary support of ₹391.15 crore at Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari (Film City), Goregaon, Mumbai. An interim campus of IICT will be setup in the coming quarter at the NFDC campus in Mumbai. The campus will largely focus on train-the-trainer activities and upskilling of industry professionals in addition to other high-end emerging media technology training.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation SI. No. 6)

IPMC (INTEGRATED PROJECT MONITORING CELL)

The Ministry apprised the Committee that it is the constant endeavour of Prasar Bharati to complete the projects within the specified time frame for which monitoring mechanism has been strengthened considerably and procurement procedures have been streamlined. The Ministry further conveyed that Project review meetings are held regularly at Zonal and HQ levels and various activities involved in procurement of capital equipment and execution of works are critically assessed and targets are fixed. The frequency of monitoring meetings has been increased at all levels of Directorate and Prasar Bharati Secretariat. Use of digital platform viz e-office, e-tendering, procurement through GEM, Video conference has also been utilized. In addition to above, a dedicated IPMC (Integrated Project Monitoring Cell) has been created under the Chairmanship of CEO (PB) to monitor the progress of projects and improvement in their implementation. The Committee were further informed that Monitoring of progress in respect of various targeted projects being undertaken in BIND Scheme (2021-26) for FY 2024-25. On ground status report with regard to the projects and difficulties being faced/ their solutions in execution of projects were deliberated among participants. The Committee

would like to know about the achievements after the creation of IPMC. The Committee may be communicated about the composition of IPMC and wonder whether the Ministry have explored the possibility of including outside domain experts in this Cell for expert guidance.

The Committee also learn that the Visual Radio project being a first-of-its-kind initiative for Akashvani, was hindered initially due to it being a novel concept. However, the initial issues have been addressed by revising and firming up its design specifications. Its procurement has commenced through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal and is expected to be completed within this financial year. The status of this project may be submitted at the earliest in their Action Taken Report. The Committee would also like to know whether any work study for technical manpower requirement, training component, etc. has been done before launching this new project. If not, the Committee would like to suggest Ministry to factor into these requirements before launching the same and apprise them accordingly.

Reply of the Government

As regards IPMC, the Integrated Project Monitoring Cell (IPMC) in Prasar Bharati was established to strengthen the monitoring Mechanism of ongoing BIND 2021-26 Projects in year 2022.

IPMC has been instrumental for efficient execution of projects by different project wings by resolving several issues such as obtaining necessary approvals (IFD, MII etc.) and timely completion of various stages (preparation of specs, floating of tenders, issue of purchase orders, supply of equipment installation etc.).

Further, an "Apex committee" comprising of senior officers of Procurement Division, Design Divisions of DD and AIR, Finance Divisions of Prasar Bharati Sectt., AIR and DD, has been formed for better monitoring of projects of DD and AIR under BIND 2021-26. Meetings of the committee are held regularly at least once in fortnight.

The status of the Visual Radio project to be submitted to the Committee is given below:

S. No.	No. of Stations	Status
South Zone		
1	06 Stations	Order placed for phone in console. Order placed for servers. PDI completed. Receipt of servers expected at site shortly. Tender for Microphone, Headphone & Smart TV to be floated. Procurement of Production consoles.
North Zone		
2	10 Stations	Server-Bid Published Under TEC
East Zone		
3	04 Stations	Microphone, Headphone & Smart TV procured. Servers delivered at site. Installation of server is in progress.
North Zone		
4	08 Stations	Order for server placed in February, but firm has not yet offered for PDI despite several reminders. Delivery not likely in CFY due to remote locations of some station and no flight connectivity. Order for Head phone and TV sets placed.

West Zone		
5.	05 Stations	Procurement of Server for 5 Capital Akashvani Stations. Done through GeM. Technical evaluation completed. Financial sanction accorded after the recommendation of purchase committee. Procurement of phone in console, smart TV to be taken up.

(Recommendation SI. No. 7)

FULL UTILIZATION OF FUNDS FOR NORTH EAST REGION (NER) UNDER BIND SCHEME

The Ministry stated that in the FY 2023-24 around 50% funds were utilized for content creation under BIND. Some projects of Doordarshan (DD) for content creation, though not adversely affected, got delayed in NER. The NE Region was given these BIND Scheme works for the first time. The expenditure mechanism for BIND being altogether different from that of IEBR and shortage of programme staff at each NER Kendra led to inevitable delays. However, since these DDKs have been trained adequately and the expenditure mechanism is now fully in place, it is expected that from the current financial year 2024-25, full funds allocated under BIND scheme to Doordarshan Kendras of North-East Region would be utilized in content creation. Hiring of programme professionals on contract basis is also being done to support content creation. The Committee call upon the Ministry to take immediate steps to address the issue of staff crunch in technically driven schemes of the Ministry and would like to know if any preference to local people would be given while hiring programme professionals on contract basis for NE Region. Regarding the mechanism for full utilization of funds under BIND scheme for NER from the next Financial Year, the Committee would like to be informed of the status.

Reply of the Government

Programme professionals for Doordarshan Kendras of North-East region will be selected by a committee chaired by Zonal Head (Content Ops.) of North-East Zone. Further for the posts of Broadcast Executive, Videographer, Video Post Production Assistant, Creative Editor (Graphics) proficiency in local language has been desired.

For the NER Equipments worth Rs.23.19 crores under BIND scheme have been procured in 2024-25, and procurement of many equipments are in different stages. Apart from this, status of some of the major Akashvani projects in NER as under:

1. Setting up of 10 kW FM Transmitter at Kokrajhar: The project has been completed and the transmitter has been commissioned on 03.01.2025.
2. Setting up of 1 kW FM Transmitter at Namsai: Construction of building work completed and other civil work like False ceiling, DG platform and shed work has also been completed. Work order issued for erection of 50M SS Tower at Namsai.
3. Refurbishing of Akashvani Studios at 7 Akashvani stations: At 6 stations (Tezu, Itanagar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Silchar) work order has been issued and at Tura work order is under approval.
4. Replacement of AC Plant: Work order has been issued at Imphal, Shillong, Shillong (Jazz Studio), Mokokchung has been issued and at Gangtok is under approval.

5. Replacement of Generator Set: 62.5 KVA DG at Gangtok is under procurement.
6. Visual Radio System: Setting up of Visual Radio System at Guwahati, Gangtok, Shillong, Kohima, Ahartala, Itanagar, Imphal and Aizawal is under implementation. Specification has been framed and SITC for the project is under tendering process. Servers are under procurement and Industrial feed back has been sought for procurement of 33 digital console, as no bidder has participated in the previous tendering process due to low cost and IFD has recommended for cancellation of the tender.

It is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to complete the projects within the specified time frame. Monitoring mechanism has been strengthened considerably. Procurement procedures have been streamlined. Project review meetings are held regularly at Zonal level & HQ level and various activities involved in procurement of capital equipment and execution of works are critically assessed & targets are fixed. The frequency of monitoring meetings has been increased at all levels of Directorate & Prasar Bharati Sectt. Use of digital platform viz e-office, e-tendering, procurement through GEM, Video conference is also being utilized.

In addition to above, an Apex committee has been constituted to monitor the progress of projects under the Scheme. It is Prasar Bharati endeavour to give priorities to local people for content generation for NER region.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

DIGITIZATION OF ARCHIVES OF DOORDARSHAN (DD)

The Ministry informed the Committee that all the DD channels are digitized and all possible efforts are being made to complete the remaining digitization at the earliest. The Ministry also submitted before the Committee that the archival content of public interest is being showcased through Social Media platforms like YouTube. The interested persons can approach Central Archives through email in order to purchase the recordings/media under the ambit of various archival policies. Information to this effect has been made public on Prasar Bharati website. Regarding archives of DD, the Ministry submitted that the archives have been digitised to the extent possible and efforts are being made to complete the remaining digitisation at the earliest. The Committee have long been demanding that all archives of DD may be digitized at the earliest. However, the process of digitization is still incomplete. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should expedite the process of digitization of all DD archives without any further delay so that archival contents are available to public for use. The Committee learn that social media platforms are being used to showcase the archival contents which are of public interest. The Committee wish to know what steps have been taken by the Ministry to take it to those sections of the society who are not using social media but are interested in watching these contents.

Reply of the Government

In addition to linear TV transmission, Doordarshan Channels are now being integrated in Prasar Bharati Over-The-Top (OTT) platform WAVES. Programmes telecast by regional/state channels of North-East region can be viewed by viewers through various modes like DTH platform, Cable TV Network and OTT. Digitization of Archives of Doordarshan,

a. Digitization setup at Prasar Bharati:

1. Prasar Bharati Archives have been set up to ensure digitization and preservation of Media Assets produced for the broadcast purposes/operations by Akashvani and Doordarshan.
2. All the content at Prasar Bharati Archives have been digitized
3. AIR & DD Kendras have been provided with requisite hardware & software facility to digitize and preserve the content at their level.
4. To further strengthen digitization and archival setup, suitable provision has been requested under BIND scheme.
5. The process of digitization of remaining media available at Kendra level shall be taken up in time bound manner.

b. Accessibility of archival content to the public:

1. Archival Content is curated and sent to Akashvani and Doordarshan Kendras for making it available to the public through linear broadcasting. The content is consumed by the section of society, not available on social media and digital platform.
2. Prasar Bharati has launched OTT platform “WAVES”, wherein archival content of Akashvani and Doordarshan is made available in digital mode for public free of cost. Content from other Ministries have also been published on the platform in order to make the public aware of schemes and initiatives taken by Govt. of India.
3. Content of public interest is being curated and made available to the masses through YouTube channels and other Social Media platforms.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 7 of Chapter-I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 13)

THE CINEMATOGRAPHY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2023

The Ministry informed the Committee that the Cinematography (Amendment) Act, 2023 provides for (a) provisions to check unauthorised recording and exhibition of Films amounting to piracy; (b) age-based certification of films; (c) aligning with the Supreme Court judgements; (d) perpetual validity of certificates; (e) change of category of film for television; and (f) reference to Jammu and Kashmir. The Committee would like to be apprised of the efficacy of this Act in addressing the challenges being faced by the Film Industry and whether further views/suggestion of all the stakeholders have been obtained regarding the same. The Committee further want the Ministry to explain what measures have been taken to curb the explicit circulation of films not meant for viewership of children in any form in the market. The Ministry may also provide a detail of

certificates of perpetual validity issued during the last 5 years along with the criteria set for issuance of these certificates. Further, the Committee wish to know what steps have been taken to contain adults contents aired on Social, Digital and Electronic media and action taken/being taken against the channels which are persistent lawbreakers in terms of violating the norms laid down in the Cinematography (Amendment) Act, 2023.

Reply of the Government

1. The enactment of the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023 has introduced substantial changes by addressing certification issues and providing better clarity and protection for film industry stakeholders. A key amendment under the Act is the introduction of a new age-based rating system, which splits the existing UA category into three sub-categories, viz. UA 7+, UA 13+, and UA 16+. These age-based markers are aimed to assist parents and guardians in making informed decisions about the suitability of films for their children, ensuring age-appropriate content consumption. Additionally, the Act imposes stricter penalties for piracy of films. Violations can now result in imprisonment ranging from three months to three years and fines starting at ₹3 lakhs and going up to 5% of the audited gross production cost. These measures aim to enforce accountability and uphold content integrity. To identify and address the challenges faced by the film industry stakeholders following the enactment of the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, it is crucial to seek their views and suggestions through meetings and interactions. This approach will help ensure that the changes are practical, beneficial, and representative of the industry's diverse interests.
2. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) sanctions films in accordance with the provisions of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024, and the Guidelines issued thereunder. During the examination of films, the CBFC strives to ensure that films not meant for children are appropriately classified, and necessary modifications are recommended to ensure compliance with the relevant guidelines.
3. However, the explicit circulation of films not suitable for children in the market falls outside the ambit of the CBFC. The scope of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 does not extend to content circulated on social media platforms or other digital mediums. The provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952, the Cinematograph Certification Rules 2024, and the Guidelines issued thereunder are restricted to cinematograph films. The jurisdiction of CBFC does not extend to the contents on OTT and online/digital media platforms. Regulatory measures for such platforms are governed by the separate authorities and legal frameworks.
4. Prior to the enactment of the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, sub-section 3 of section 5A of the Act prescribed that the certificate issued by the Board is valid for ten years. However, as per a notification issued by this Ministry in September 1984, the Central Government had exempted all films in respect of which certification have been or may be granted by the Board, from the validity of 10 years. The redundant provision in the Act was therefore amended through the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023 to remove the stipulation of 10 years validity. In pursuance of the aforesaid notification, certificates issued to all films by the CBFC are already being granted perpetual validity. The criteria for issuing certificates by CBFC include adherence to the certification process as outlined under the relevant provisions of the Cinematograph Act and associated guidelines. The process ensures that the films meet content standards, are in accordance with public interest, and comply with age-

appropriate viewing categories. Once certified, these films retain their validity indefinitely, eliminating the need for periodic renewal of their certification.

5. The regulation of adult content on social, digital, and electronic media does not fall under the ambit of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 or the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) is tasked solely with the certification of films for public exhibition in cinemas, as mandated by these Acts. Consequently, the CBFC has no jurisdiction over content released on over-the-top (OTT) platforms or other digital mediums. The content on OTT platforms is governed by a separate regulatory framework under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified on 25.02.2021. Part-II of the Rules is related to the user generated content on Social Media and is governed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. Part-III of the Rule provide for a Code of Ethics for publishers of OTT platforms, and a three level institutional mechanism for redressal of grievances relating to violation of the Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics requires OTT platforms not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law and undertake age-based classification of content, based on general guidelines provided in the Schedule to the Rules which have specific provisions relating to higher ratings for sexually explicit content. Further, Ministry also takes action under the provisions of Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 against OTT platforms for hosting content that is in violation of various Acts/Rules in the country that is flagged by various nodal officers from time to time. This Ministry, in March 2024, being the appropriate Government in respect of 'Digital News Publishers' and 'Publishers of OTT platforms', had taken action against 18 OTT platforms for carrying content that was in violation of Acts such the Information Technology Act, 2000, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Indecent Representation of Women Act, etc.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 14)

ADULT CONTENTS ON OTT PLATFORMS

The Ministry informed the Committee that Part III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000 relates to publishers of online curated content, commonly known as OTT platforms. It was further submitted that OTT platforms providing access to content which has an "A" rating shall take all efforts to restrict access to such content by a child through the implementation of appropriate access control measures and in March 2024, the Ministry had taken action to block 18 OTT platforms publishing obscene, and, in some instances, pornographic content. 19 websites, 10 apps (7 on Google Play Store, 3 on Apple App Store), and 57 social media accounts associated with these platforms were disabled for public access in India. In view of the above information, the Committee harps upon the point that Ministry may furnish the details of preventive measures adopted by them so that the pervasion of restricted contents among children be stopped. The Committee would also like to know if such contents blocked by the Ministry on 18 OTT, 19 websites and 10 apps are easily available on social media and other media platforms like Telegram Channel. If so, the Committee may be apprised of how this situation could be dealt with. The Committee would further like to know whether the existing Legal Framework is ample enough to deal with this issue or more stringent laws are required to deal with this issue especially in view of the latest technologies in the field. The Committee may be informed of the contemplated action by the Ministry in this regard. The Committee would like to advise

the Ministry that provision for some sort of deterrent punishment should be put in place for the repeated offenders in this regard. The Committee would also like to know whether the OTT platforms committing the same mistake under the guise of changing the name of programmes, changing the means of dissemination and changing the IP address etc., with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are strictly dealt with. The Committee would like to be apprised of the details in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Code of Ethics prescribed under part-III of IT Rules, 2021 provides for publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) which, inter alia, require the publishers not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force and to undertake age-based classification of content into 5 categories, based on general guidelines provided in the Appendix to the Rules. The Schedule prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021 inter-alia provides for the following sets of guidelines for Classification of any curated content namely 'Context', 'Theme' and 'Tone and impact'.

Theme: Classification decisions may take into the theme of any content but will depend significantly on the treatment of that theme, especially the sensitivity of its presentation. The most challenging themes (for example, drug misuse, violence, pedophilia, sex, racial or communal hatred or violence etc.) are unlikely to be appropriate at the junior levels of classification.

Part-II of the Schedule prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021 provides for the Issue Related Guidelines.

(a) Discrimination: The categorical classification of content shall take into account the impact of a film on matters such as caste, race, gender, religion, disability or sexuality that may arise in a wide range of works, and the classification decision will take account of the strength or impact of their inclusion.

(b) Psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking and tobacco: Films or serials, etc. that as a whole portray misuse of psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking and tobacco would qualify for a higher category of classification.

(c) Imitable behaviour:

(1) Classification decisions may take into account any portrayal of criminal and violent behaviour with weapons.

(2) Portrayal of potentially dangerous behaviour that are likely to incite the commission of any offence (including suicide, and infliction of self-harm) and that children and young people may potentially copy, shall receive a higher classification.

(3) Films or serials with song and dance scenes comprising lyrics and gestures that have sexual innuendos would receive a higher classification.

Provision under part-III of IT Rules, 2021 to restrict certain curated content by a child

Display of Classification:

- The publisher of online curated content making available content that is classified as U/A 13+ or higher shall ensure that access control mechanisms, including parental locks, are made available for such content.

- A publisher of online curated content which makes available content or programme that is classified as “A” shall implement a reliable age verification mechanism for viewership of such content.
- Restriction of access to certain curated content by a child: Every publisher of online curated content providing access to online curated content which has an “A” rating shall take all efforts to restrict access to such content by a child through the implementation of appropriate access control measures.

2. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, on 19.02.2025, issued advisory to Online Curated Content Publishers (OTT Platforms) on adherence of Indian Laws and the Code of Ethics prescribed under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

3. While the Ministry took action to block 18 OTT Platforms publishing obscene content, the copies of the same was also marked to Delhi Police for appropriate action regarding unlawful content being published.

4. The Ministry has received various grievances through multiple channels that the platforms blocked by it are still operating by changing name or IP address and the Ministry is reviewing the same for appropriate action on such platforms.

5. Further, Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting while replying to Lok Sabha Starred Question #21 on 27.11.2024 has stressed on the need for strengthening the editorial checks in respect of the content being published on social media and OTT platforms. It was mentioned that such editorial checks which used to be there in the past are no more there in the era of social media and OTT platforms, leading to freedom of speech being misused to spread vulgar content on OTT platforms and fake news on social media. The Hon'ble Minister stated that there is a need to make the existing laws more stringent, and for this purpose there is a need for building a societal consensus, suggesting that this issue could be considered by the Parliamentary Committees.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 10 of Chapter-I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 15)

OVERHAULING OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS (CRSs)

The Committee learn that for CRSs in 2022-23, the percentage of Actual Expenditure in respect of Budget Estimate was 52.08% while in respect of Revised Estimate, it was 66.66% and these figures in 2023-24 reached up to 84.80% for Budget Estimate and Revised Estimate. The Committee note that the Ministry have failed consistently over the years to utilize the entire fund allocated to them in CRSs. The Committee would like to know the reasons for the same and advise them to take appropriate corrective steps to address the issues which are responsible for surrender of funds and ensure optimum utilization of allocated funds.

The Committee were also explained by the Ministry that a total number of 29 applications for Community Radio Stations are pending with the Ministry, which are at various stages of processing for grant of permission for setting up of Community Radio Stations. The Committee would like to know the reasons for pendency of these 29

applications and also advise the Ministry to prepare a proper Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to deal with such requests in future so that time lag could be minimized.

Reply of the Government

The major reasons of underutilization of funds and road map to increase the utilization of funds are listed below

- a) One of the components of the Scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Community Radio (which is demand driven completely). The Community Radio Stations submit their cases for financial assistance (after minimum three months of functioning) for the expenditure incurred by them on setting up Community Radio Station as per policy/guidelines. Thus, utilization depends upon the demand submitted by the CRS also. Ministry is approaching to all the operating CRs to make them aware of this scheme through all possible means emails, social media, and conducting conferences and workshops.
 - b) Ministry has also taken several steps for strengthening the Community Radio Movement and also to increase the utilization of funds. The amount of financial assistance given to a Community Radio Station has also been increased from Rs. 10 Lakhs to an amount varying from Rs. 16.20 Lakhs to Rs. 24 Lakhs as per eligibility by its revised policy dated 23.09.2024. The incentives have been also provided for use of Green Energy and women participation in revised policy. In addition to this, to facilitate research, innovation and skilling in the sector, the Government of India has launched fellowship programmes and internship programmes under the Scheme.
 - c) During last two financial years conferences were also being organized in the Virtual Mode which also led to saving of the funds. However, in this year physical workshops and conferences were planned and organized to increase the awareness and capacity building.
 - d) Ministry is planning to shifted on purely online mode for granting permission to set up community radio through **Broadcast Seva Portal** like signing of Lol and upgrading to better monitoring and analysis to reduce delay in each step. The other measures like conducting in-house trainings to Standardize/uniform handling of application, frequent interaction with applicants to reduce delay. These measures are important as increasing the numbers of operational Community Radio and speedy finalization of applications has a direct relationship with utilization of funds. However, *as per the guidelines, the applications are required to be cleared from MHA, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Ministry of Communications). It is pertinent to mention that after obtaining LOI, applicant applies to Ministry of Communication for Wireless Operating License before commissioning the CRS. The License for operating CRS is issued by the Ministry of Communication, but sometimes the clearance from WPC/ MHA/MOD takes time.*
- a. The Status of the applications is given in the tabular format as Annexure-I.
 - b. Every application received through Broadcast Seva Portal has to pass through broadly four stages as per Para 3 of Guidelines (available on <https://mib.gov.in> and placed at Annexure-II)

- i. Initial Verification of documents/proofs submitted by applicants through portal takes one Month but substantial numbers of applications are being received with inaccurate/mismatched data/documents/proof, then application returned (online) for clarification& correction, so delay happens in such cases.
 - ii. Forward the application to WPC, MHA, MOD for clearances and time specified in guidelines is 3 months. However, only WPC Clearance is required in the cases of Government entities.
 - iii. 3rd Stage is (a) Conducting Screening Committee (SCM) for the NPOs case, which got all clearances from concerned ministry (b) Inter Ministerial Committee approve/reject the cases of NPOs cleared by SCM but in case of Government entities like Central/Army Schools or Universities directly taken at IMC bypassing SCM. Then Lol is issued to successful applicant which files for DL/SACFA through online portal.
 - iv. 4th and Final Stage: Once cleared stage 3, applicant approach MIB for signing of Grant of Permission Agreement (GoPA). After clearing all stages applicant can install and commission the community Radio.
- c. The SoP mentioned above steps are very clear and transparent (Para 3 of Revised Policy Guidelines for setting up Community Radio Stations in India dated 13.02.2024 (available on <https://mib.gov.in> and attached as Annexure-II).

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No. 13 of Chapter-I)

CHAPTER- III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO
PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE
REITERATION

-NIL-

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE

(Recommendation Sl. No. 4)

BIND SCHEME- CHALLENGES AND MEASURES

While examining the Budgetary allocation for financial year 2024-25 and financial year 2023-24, the Committee observed that there was reduction of funds under two categories. Allocation of the Ministry was reduced by Rs. 100.69 crore under Central Sector scheme i.e., Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) Scheme and Rs. 279.67 crore was reduced under the other Central Expenditure. In their submission, the Ministry stated that the reduction under the 'Other Central Expenditure Budget' was due to retirement of government employees who were on deemed deputation in Prasar Bharati, resulting in reduced demand in respect of pay and allowances as well as retirement benefits. While explaining about reasons for reduced allocation under BIND scheme, it was inter-alia stated by the Ministry that they were due to (i) time taken in framing specifications of new projects; (ii) delay in erection of towers due to technical and administrative issues; and (iii) multiple attempts made for tender procurement of 1,20,000 DTH sets for distribution in tribal, remote and Left Wing Extremism areas. Further, it has been submitted that the Ministry is considering adopting the DBT mode for distributing STBs for DD Free Dish and the modalities are being worked out in consultation with MHA and there are a number of pending litigations against the Ministry.

The Committee were enlightened that the Ministry is considering distribution of DD Free Dish Set-Top Boxes in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode and modalities of the distribution are being worked out by Prasar Bharati. Consultations are also being done with the Ministry of Home Affairs to collect the beneficiary bank details and finalize payment eligibility criteria for the beneficiaries. Prasar Bharati is also in consultation with Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA) and India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) to ensure availability of DD Free Dish Set-Top Boxes in remote border areas and arrangement of installation and after-sales services of the Set-Top Boxes. The Ministry elaborated about enhancing the viewership and popularization of DD Free Dish Platform in VVP (Vibrant Village Programme) areas, BADP (Border Area Development Programme), North-East Region, LWE (Left Wing Extremism) affected areas, J&K, and other strategic areas. Distribution of 8.7 Lakhs DD Free Dish Receive sets was sanctioned under the BIND Scheme. The data of around 8.10 lakh beneficiaries has been collected through an online portal. Earlier distribution plan progressed in Supply Inspection Testing and Commissioning (SITC) mode, however, now it is being planned under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode for enhanced transparency and efficiency. Prasar Bharati is working on modalities for distribution of DD Free Dish DTH, with a decentralized model of delivery involving District Administration.

The Committee appreciate the efforts of the Ministry to connect the border areas with the main population of the country, but at the same time they would like to know about security measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Ministry to control the issues of hacking or proliferation via wi-fi across the border. The Committee would like the Ministry to address the various challenges encountered by projects under BIND scheme including procurement of 1,20,000 DTH sets and seek adequate funds from Ministry of Finance for the same in the next Financial Year with proper justification. The Committee

also expect that the Integrated Project Monitoring Cell (IPMC) may also look into these challenges with all seriousness as it deserves.

Reply of the Government

Meetings in Prasar Bharati, DBT Mission and MIB were held to sort out various associated issues for Set Top Box distribution in DBT Mode. Revised draft of modalities was submitted to Ministry on 26.12.2024. Meetings were held in MIB on 31.12.2024. The matter of finalizing the modalities for STB distribution in DBT Mode is getting expedited. As regards issues of hacking or proliferation via Wi-Fi across the border of such STBs, it is submitted that typical DD Free Dish STBs take RF input through LNB/Dish Antenna and do not work on Wi-Fi.

IPMC (Integrated Project Monitoring Cell) was established to strengthen the monitoring mechanism. IPMC has a limited role of monitoring the progress of projects on periodical basis and encourage various project units to expedite the activities for timely completion of projects. However, the suggestions of committee regarding challenges being faced in implementation of projects will be duly considered for various Doordarshan projects under the BIND scheme.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 9)

MONETISATION OF ASSETS OF DOORDARSHAN KENDRAS (DDKs)

The Ministry, while informing the Committee about whether any study had been conducted to assess the assets which were in idle state for a long time under Doordarshan Kendras in India, stated that no study has so far been conducted to assess the assets under Doordarshan Kendras in India. The Committee were further informed that Prasar Bharati Board has approved a draft monetization plan including feasibility study of Prasar Bharati land assets (both Akashvani & Doordarshan). The Committee were apprised that the draft monetization plan included that the Prasar Bharati will monetize land assets on PPP model without alienating the land and the revenue generated will be used by Prasar Bharati making it sustainable. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of draft monetization plan and its intended objectives as well as outcomes. The Committee would also earnestly recommend that the Ministry should conduct study of all their assets which are lying in idle state for a long time in all Akashvani and Doordarshan Kendras by forming a Committee of experts and apprise them accordingly at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

Prasar Bharati intends to monetize its underutilized land assets to generate additional revenue, enhancing its financial sustainability and enabling it to fulfill its role as public service broadcaster.

Prasar Bharati is conducting a prefeasibility study for the monetization of identified underutilized assets of Doordarshan and Akashvani. Following, the prefeasibility study, monetization of identified land parcel and building asset will be undertaken for financially viable assets. As per established framework, the appraisal and approval will be taken from the appropriate Competent Authority on a case-to-case basis.

For monetization of Prasar Bharati's non core assets, consultations have been held with the stakeholders and on their comments, Ministry is preparing a consolidated note for requesting Cabinet Secretariat to convene a CoS meeting.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No.10)

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF IN PRASAR BHARATI

While submitting on the shortage of staff in Doordarshan Kendras, the Ministry deposing before the Committee stated that with change in technology, introduction of alternative platforms etc. manpower requirement has changed with passage of time. The Ministry further submitted that in Doordarshan Kendras, there is shortage of staff in programme, engineering, and administrative cadres. Promotions till recent times in programme/engineering cadre and departmental exams for promotion in administrative cadre could not take place mostly due to pending court cases. Apart from this, filling up of the posts earmarked through direct recruitment has also stopped due to dissociation of UPSC and SSC in respect of Prasar Bharati being an autonomous body. The Ministry further elaborated that the process of rationalization of staff as per the recommendations of Manpower Audit (MPA) report is under consideration. Detailing about the problems of recruitment in Prasar Bharati, the Ministry explained that officials are regularly retiring on superannuation and since there is no fresh recruitment taking place, the young talent are in short. The Ministry further submitted that to rationalize these problems, Prasar Bharati Recruitment Board was constituted on 01.07.2020 in accordance with Ministry of Information & Broadcasting notification dated 12.02.2020 and the process of recruitment to fill up the backlog vacancies for physically impaired persons was initiated by the Board.

The Committee observe that there is overall shortage of manpower in Prasar Bharati and that is being managed by re-deploying available manpower and hiring persons on assignment basis for assisting in production and day-to-day work of the Doordarshan Kendras. The Committee observe that the Manpower Audit of Prasar Bharati had recommended several steps to phase out obsolete technologies and unviable services, automate and IT enabled key operations and to outsource non-core activities so as to bring the man power requirements in line with global best practices in Public Broadcasting. The Committee urge the Ministry to make a holistic assessment of staff required in various cadres consequent upon change in technology. The Committee may be apprised of the follow up actions taken by the Ministry to sort out the problem of shortage of manpower and look into the feasibility of hiring and appointing staff on contractual basis. The Committee also propose that necessary steps should be taken for hiring specialists on contract for new roles required by Prasar Bharati in line with the proposed structural change and build an effective mix of full time and contractual manpower till full time staff are recruited by Prasar Bharati Recruitment Board.

Reply of the Government

Prasar Bharati Recruitment Board had been constituted for filling up vacancies for the posts in Akashvani and Doordarshan, having scale of pay less than that of the Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, through Direct Recruitment/ Departmental Competitive Examination/ Deputations, as per the extant Recruitment Rules.

To assess optimal number of posts in various streams and levels as per the current and future requirement of Prasar Bharati, the exercise of HR Transformation is underway. This exercise will also assess and prescribe modalities for roping in specialists on contract for new roles, where internal expertise are not available, in line with the proposed structural changes and to build an effective mix of full time and contractual manpower. Only on conclusion and acceptance of the recommendations of this exercise, a clear picture on the vacancies to be filled will emerge and accordingly, appropriate action will be taken.

However, to tide over the acute manpower shortage, Prasar Bharati is engaging professionals in various categories under Contractual Engagement Policy (CEP 2021) on short-term contracts to meet its urgent requirement of skilled and professional manpower.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 11)

MIGRATION TOWARDS DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TV

While furnishing details regarding action taken on the recommendations of the Sub-Group Committee in respect of the Terrestrial Broadcast of Prasar Bharati, the Ministry envisioned that any further expansion of Digital Terrestrial Transmission by Doordarshan should be undertaken only after finalization of a viable policy on Digital Terrestrial TV, identification of areas where such transmission will be continued and choice of appropriate technology. The Ministry further informed the Committee that Prasar Bharati has signed an MoU with IIT, Kanpur for collaborative activities in various areas and Proof of Concept (PoC) for Next Generation Technology- Direct to Mobile Broadcasting (D2M) was carried out by IIT, Kanpur in Bengaluru and Delhi.

The Committee observe that the Ministry is in the process of finalizing a suitable policy on Digital Terrestrial TV along with identifying areas where such transmission would continue with choice of appropriate technology. The Committee also note that for Direct to Mobile Broadcasting, IIT Kanpur has been assigned the collaborative activities and has initiated it in some of our cities. The Committee would like to be apprised about the outcome of these initiatives and depending on its success, the Ministry may initiate the Direct Mobile Broadcasting in more cities of India.

Reply of the Government

This Ministry has advised Prasar Bharati to prepare a road map for offering D2M service as a public service after taking into consideration the various issues raised by stakeholder Ministries.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 12)

SHORTAGE OF STAFF IN ALL INDIA RADIO (AIR) AND GRIEVANCE OF AIR EMPLOYEES

The Ministry informed the Committee, while giving details on the issues with AIR regarding Grievance Redressal Mechanism for its employees, that Akashvani is facing acute shortage of Staff in all its cadres and wings. The Ministry further submitted that attempt is being made to overcome the same to some extent by engaging officials on short term contract basis. While elaborating on Grievance Redressal and Access Mechanism, the Ministry informed the Committee that it has been functioning in accordance with the guidelines of Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievance and monitored through the Centralized Public Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). Dwelling further on this matter, the Ministry explained that Public grievances and pension redressal petitions are being attended to promptly and disposed of at the earliest and Grievance redressal status reports on disposal of Grievances are submitted to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as and when

sought. The Committee note that the Ministry have to hire officials on a short term contract basis to overcome the problem of shortage of staff, which is pervasive in all cadres, wings and Kendras of Akashvani.

In the light of the poor condition of staff management in Akashvani, the Committee do opine that it should be taken up with the DoPT for bridging the gap of recruitment that is adversely affecting the functioning of Akashvani and resultantly the quality of its programmes. The Committee would also like to know the outcome of the request of the Ministry in September, 2022 for financial help which was submitted to the concerned Department to enable recruitment initially for critical posts and subsequently for other posts.

Reply of the Government

Prasar Bharati Recruitment Board had been constituted for filling up vacancies for the posts in Akashvani and Doordarshan, having scale of pay less than that of the Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, through Direct Recruitment/ Departmental Competitive Examination/ Deputations, as per the extant Recruitment Rules.

To assess optimal number of posts in various streams and levels as per the current and future requirement of Prasar Bharati, the exercise of HR Transformation is underway. This exercise will also assess and prescribe modalities for roping in specialists on contract for new roles, where internal expertise are not available, in line with the proposed structural changes and to build an effective mix of full time and contractual manpower. Only on conclusion and acceptance of the recommendations of this exercise, a clear picture on the vacancies to be filled will emerge and accordingly, appropriate action will be taken.

However, to tide over the acute manpower shortage, Prasar Bharati is engaging professionals in various categories under Contractual Engagement Policy (CEP 2021) on short-term contracts to meet its urgent requirement of skilled and professional manpower.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 16)

AMENDMENT TO THE ALLOCATION OF BUSINESS RULES

The Central Government vide Notification dated July 28, 2023 has amended the 'Allocation of Business Rules' with respect to the subject relating to online advertisements. Thus, content made available by online content providers/publishers has been brought under the mandate of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The revised entry under Allocation of Business Rules of the Ministry are:-

VA. Digital/Online Media

22A. Films and Audio-Visual programmes/content made available by online content providers/publishers.

22B. News and current affairs content on online platforms

22C. Online Advertisements.

In this regard, it is stated that Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is in the process of formulation of Rules for regulation of online advertisements as per allocation

of Business. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of formulation of these Rules for regulations of online advertisements.

Reply of the Government

The Rules or regulation of online advertisements are currently in the Inter-Ministerial Consultation stage and the draft rules are being finalized by the Ministry.

(File No. H-11013/27/2024- PC Cell dated 30.03.2025)

**NEW DELHI;
21 July, 2025**

30 Asadha, 1947 (Saka)

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology.

Revised Policy Guidelines for setting up Community Radio Stations in India**Foreword**

- (a) In December 2002, the Government of India approved a policy for the grant of licenses for setting up of Community Radio Stations to well established educational institutions including IITs/IIMs.
- (b) The matter was reconsidered in the year 2006 and the Government decided to broad base the policy by bringing 'Non-profit' organisations like civil society organisations and voluntary organisations etc, under its ambit in order to allow greater participation by the civil society on issues relating to development & social change. The revised Policy Guidelines were issued in the year 2006. The Policy Guidelines issued in the year 2006, were subsequently amended in the year 2017, 2018 and 2022.
- (c) To ensure financial sustainability of Community Radio Stations and to ensure growth of the Community Radio Sector, the Government has carried out further amendments in the Policy Guidelines. Now, the Revised Policy Guidelines are as under :-

1. Basic Principles

An organisation desirous of operating a Community Radio Station (CRS) must be able to satisfy and adhere to the following principles:

- a) It should be explicitly a 'not-for-profit' organisation and should have a proven record of at least three years of service to the local community;
- b) The CRS, to be operated by it, should be designed to serve the local community in its coverage area;
- c) It should have an ownership and management structure that is reflective of the community that the CRS seeks to serve;
- d) It must be a Legal Entity i.e. it should be registered under any such act relevant to the purpose and the registration, at the time of application, should be at least three years old;
- e) NGOs, registered societies and Public Charitable Trusts shall be registered on NITI Aayog's NGO Darpan portal and the applicant shall provide its Unique ID along with the application.

2. Eligibility Criteria

- a) The following types of organisations shall be eligible to apply for Community Radio licences:
 - (i) Community based organizations, which satisfy the basic principles listed in para 1 above, shall be considered eligible for making an application for grant of permission for setting up Community Radio Stations in India. These would include State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Autonomous Bodies, Civil Society Organisations, Voluntary Organisations, Registered Societies, Public Charitable Trusts, not-for-profit organizations set up by Self Help Groups (SHGs) and not-for-profit Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs);

- (ii) Educational Institutions.
- b) The following shall not be eligible to run a CRS:
 - (i) Individuals;
 - (ii) Political Parties and their affiliate organisations; [including students, women's, trade unions and such other wings affiliated to these parties.];
 - (iii) Organisations operating with a motive to earn profit;
 - (iv) Organisations expressly banned by the Union and State Governments; and
 - (v) Religious bodies.

3. Selection Process & Processing of the applications

- a) The applicants shall be required to apply online, on a portal specified by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), with a processing fee of Rs. 2500/- and the applications shall be processed in the following manner:
 - (i) An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) shall be constituted under Chairmanship of Secretary (I&B) to consider applications from eligible organizations.
 - (ii) Applications received from Government institutions/ Organisations shall be placed before IMC. After approval by IMC, Letter of Intent (LOI) shall be issued, subject to availability of Frequency spot, provided by Ministry of Communication, at the location proposed by the applicant in its application.
 - (iii) Applications received from Private institutions/ Organisations shall be placed before IMC. After approval by IMC, Letter of Intent (LOI) shall be issued subject to receiving clearance from Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence and subject to availability of Frequency spot provided by Ministry of Communication, at the location proposed by the applicant in its application.
- b) A time schedule for obtaining clearances shall be as follows:-
 - (i) Within one month of receipt of the application, the MIB shall process the application and either communicate to the applicant deficiencies, if any, or will forward the application to the other Ministries for clearance as prescribed in para 3(a)(ii) and 3(a)(iii) above, as the case may be.
 - (ii) The Ministries concerned shall communicate their comments/ clearance within three months of receipt of the application. However, in the event of the failure of the concerned ministry to grant the comments/clearance within the stipulated period of three months, the case shall be referred to the IMC for a decision for issue of LOI.
 - (iii) The validity of LOI shall be one year from the date of its issue. The validity of LOI may be extended for another period of three months, on the request of the applicant giving reasons thereof, which may be considered on case to case basis.
 - (iv) The LOI holder shall be required to sign a Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) with the MIB and submit a bank guarantee for a sum of Rs. 25,000/- for a period of ten

(10) years, which will enable the LOI Holder to seek Wireless Operating License (WOL) from the Ministry of Communication after deposit of requisite fees, as applicable. The Community Radio Station can be made operational only after the

receipt of WOL from the Ministry of Communication.

- (v) Within one year from the issue of LOI or within six months of the signing of GOPA, whichever is earlier, the Permission Holder shall operationalize the Community Radio Station and shall intimate the date of commissioning of the Community Radio Station to the MIB. In case the applicant fails to operationalize the CRS within the above stipulated period, it may seek permission for extension of time for another three months stating the reason. The request for extension of time for commissioning of CRS may be considered on case to case basis.
- (vi) Failure to comply with time schedule prescribed above shall make the LOI/GOPA holder liable for cancellation of its LOI/GOPA and forfeiture of the Bank Guarantee.

4. Grant of Permission Agreement conditions

- a) The Initial period for “Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA)” shall be for ten (10) years.
- b) Grant of Permission Agreement shall be extended for a period of five (5) years at a time. Extension shall be granted on the basis of an application and verification of adherence to the terms and conditions of the permission. The application for extension shall be submitted one year before the expiry of existing GOPA. The GOPA of existing CRS will remain valid as per the agreement signed with the licensee.
- c) A report on continuous operation of CRS may be sought by Ministry from local Akashvani Kendra or a person/officer deputed by the Ministry during the GOPA period.
- d) The Grant of Permission Agreement and the Permission letter shall be non-transferable.
- e) No permission fee shall be levied on the Permission Holder. However, the Permission Holder will be required to pay the spectrum usage fee to WPC wing of Ministry of Communication.
- f) In case the permission holder shuts down broadcasting activity for more than 3 months after commencement of operation, its permission is liable to be cancelled.
- g) An eligible organization/ institution that operates in multiple districts shall be allowed to set up a **maximum of six (6) CRS in different districts of operation**, provided it fulfils the following conditions
 - (i) Continuous operation of the previous commissioned CRS for at least one year at the time of applying for setting up subsequent CRS. The licenses for multiple CRSs would not be issued en masse but one at a time. Only one CRS per district will be allowed to the organisation.
 - (ii) The organizations setting up multiple CRS should ensure participation of the local community and broadcast content relevant to the community served by the respective CRS.
- h) The organization seeking to setup multiple CRS may be required to submit

- an undertaking, confirming that the programs shall be prepared locally.
- i) The Permission Holder shall be required to submit compliance report on the GOPA conditions as and when sought by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the prescribed format.

5. Content regulation & monitoring

- a) The programmes should be of immediate relevance to the community. The emphasis should be on developmental, agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social welfare, community development and cultural programmes. The programming should reflect the special interests and needs of the local community.
- b) The Licensee shall setup an advisory and content committee comprising members from the local community which will decide upon the content being broadcasted on Community Radio. At least half of the members of Advisory and Content Committee should be women.
- c) At least 50% of content shall be generated with the participation of the local community, out of which at least half of the content should be focussed on women empowerment and the themes should go beyond nutrition, breastfeeding, pregnancy, recipes and beauty.
- d) Programmes should preferably be in the local language and dialect(s).
- e) The Permission Holder shall have to adhere to the provisions of the Programme and Advertising Code as prescribed by Prasar Bharati for Akashwani.
- f) The Permission Holder shall preserve all programmes broadcast by the CRS for three months from the date of broadcast.
- g) The Permission Holder shall not broadcast any programmes, which relate to 'news and current affairs' and are otherwise political in nature. However, CRS can broadcast news and current affairs contents sourced exclusively from Akashwani in its original form or translated into the local language/dialect. Akashwani shall source its news to CRS without any charges. It will be the responsibility of the CRS permission holder to ensure that the news is not distorted or edited during translation.

The broadcast pertaining to the following categories will be treated as non-'news and current affairs' broadcast and will therefore be permissible:

- (i) Information pertaining to sporting events excluding live coverage. However live commentaries of sporting events of local nature may be permissible;
 - (ii) Information pertaining to Traffic and Weather;
 - (iii) Information pertaining to and coverage of local cultural events, festivals;
 - (iv) coverage of topics pertaining to examinations, results, admissions, career counselling;
 - (v) Availability of employment opportunities;
 - (vi) Public announcements pertaining to civic amenities like electricity, water supply, natural calamities, health alerts etc. as provided by the local administration,
 - (vii) Such other categories not permitted at present that may subsequently be specifically permitted by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting from time to time.
- h) The Permission Holder shall ensure that nothing is included in the

programmes broadcast which:

- (i) Offends against good taste or decency;
 - (ii) Contains criticism of friendly countries;
 - (iii) Contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which either promote or result in promoting communal discontent or disharmony;
 - (iv) Contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendoes and half-truths;
 - (v) Is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote-anti-national attitudes;
 - (vi) Contains anything amounting to contempt of court or anything affecting the integrity of the Nation;
 - (vii) Contains aspersions against the dignity of the President/Vice President and the Judiciary;
 - (viii) Criticises, maligns or slanders any individual in person or certain groups, segments of social, public and moral life of the country;
 - (ix) Encourages superstition or blind belief;
 - (x) Denigrates women;
 - (xi) Denigrates children;
 - (xii) May present/depict/suggest as desirable the use of drugs including alcohol, narcotics and tobacco or may stereotype, incite, vilify or perpetuate hatred against or attempt to demean any person or group on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preference, religion, age or physical or mental disability.
- i) The Permission Holder shall ensure that due care is taken with respect to religious programmes with a view to avoid:
- (i) Exploitation of religious susceptibilities; and
 - (ii) Committing offence to the religious views and beliefs of those belonging to a particular religion or religious denomination.

6. Imposition of penalty/revocation of Permission Agreement

- a) In case there is any violation of conditions cited in 5(a) to 5(i), Government may *suo- moto* or on basis of complaints take cognisance and place the matter before the Inter-Ministerial Committees on Programme and Advertising Codes for recommending appropriate penalties. On the recommendation of the Committee a decision to impose penalties shall be taken. However, before the imposition of a penalty the Permission Holder shall be given an opportunity to represent its case.
- b) The penalty shall comprise of:
 - (i) Temporary suspension of Permission for operating the CRS for a period up to one month in the case of the first violation.
 - (ii) Temporary suspension of Permission for operating the CRS for a period up to three months in the case of the second violation depending on the gravity of violation.
- c) Revocation of the Permission for any subsequent violation.
- d) In case of revocation of Permission, the Permission Holder will not be eligible to apply directly or indirectly for a fresh permission in future for a period of five years. "Provided the penalty imposed as per above provision

shall be without prejudice to any penal action under applicable laws including the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 and Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933, as modified from time to time”.

- e) In the event of suspension of permission as mentioned in para 6(b)(i) & 6(b)(ii), the permission holder will continue to discharge its obligations under the Grant of Permission Agreement during the suspension period also.

7. Transmitter Power and Range

- a) CRS shall be expected to cover a range of 5-10 km. For this, a transmitter having maximum Effective Radiated Power (ERP) of 100 W would be adequate. However, in case of a proven need where the applicant organisation is able to establish that it needs to serve a larger area or the terrain so warrants, higher transmitter wattage with maximum ERP up to 250 Watts can be considered on a case-to-case basis, subject to availability of frequency and such other clearances as necessary from the Ministry of Communication. Requests for higher transmitter power above 100 Watts and up to 250 Watts shall also be subject to approval by the IMC constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- b) The maximum height of antenna permitted above the ground for the CRS shall not exceed 30 meters. However, minimum height of Antenna above ground should be at least 15 meters to prevent possibility of biological hazards of RF radiation.

8. Funding & Sustenance

- a) Applicants will be eligible to seek funding from multilateral aid agencies. Applicants seeking foreign funds for setting up the CRS will have to obtain FCRA clearance under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1976.
- b) Transmission of sponsored programmes shall not be permitted except programmes sponsored by central & state Governments and other organisations to broadcast public interest information. In addition, limited advertising and announcements relating to local events, local businesses and services and employment opportunities shall be allowed. The maximum duration of such limited advertising will be restricted to 12 (twelve) minutes per hour of broadcast.
- c) Revenue generated from advertisement and announcements as per Para 8(b) shall be utilized only for the operational expenses and capital expenditure of the CRS. After meeting the full financial needs of the CRS, surplus may, with prior written permission of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, be ploughed into the primary activity of the organization i.e. for education in case of educational institutions and for furthering the primary objectives for which the NGO concerned was established.
- d) Government shall strive to build an ecosystem for continual growth of CRS and encourage sharing of content among the CR community.

9. Other Terms & Conditions

- a) The basic objective of the Community Radio broadcasting would be to serve the cause of the community in the service area of the Permission Holder by involving members of the community in the broadcast of their programmes.

For this purpose, community shall mean people living in the zone of the coverage of the broadcasting service of the Permission Holder. Each applicant will have to specify the geographical community or the community of interest it wants to cover. The Permission Holder shall provide the services of his CRS on free-to-air basis.

- b) Though the Permission Holder will operate the service under these guidelines and as per the terms and conditions of the Grant of Permission Agreement signed, the permission shall be subject to the condition that as and when any regulatory authority to regulate and monitor the broadcast services in the country is constituted, the permission holder will adhere to the norms, rules and regulations prescribed by such authority from time to time.
- c) The Permission Holder shall provide such information to the Government on such intervals, as may be required. In this connection, the Permission Holder is required to preserve recording of programmes broadcast during the previous three months failing which Permission Agreement is liable to be revoked.
- d) The Government or its authorized representative shall have the right to inspect the broadcast facilities of the Permission Holder and collect such information as considered necessary in public and community interest.
- e) The Government reserves the right to take over the entire services and networks of the Permission Holder or revoke/terminate/suspend the Permission in the interest of national security or in the event of national emergency/ war or low intensity conflict or under similar type of situations.
- f) All foreign personnel likely to be deployed by way of appointment, contract, consultancy etc. by the Permission Holder for installation, maintenance and operation of the Permission Holder's services shall be required to obtain prior security clearance from Government of India.
- g) The Government reserves the right to modify, at any time, the terms and conditions if it is necessary to do so, in public interest or for the proper conduct of broadcasting or for security considerations.
- h) Notwithstanding anything contained anywhere else in the Grant of Permission Agreement, the Government shall have the power to direct the permission holder to broadcast any special message as may be considered desirable to meet any contingency arising out of natural emergency, or public interest or natural disaster and the like, and the Permission holder shall be obliged to comply with such directions.
- i) The permission holder shall be required to submit their audited annual accounts to the Government in respect of the organization/division running the CRS. The accounts shall clearly show the income and expenditure incurred and the Assets and Liabilities in respect of the CRS.
- j) A Permission Agreement will be subject to such other conditions as may be determined by the Government.
- K) The Government shall make special arrangements for monitoring and enforcement of the ceiling on advertisements, particularly in those areas where private FM radio stations have been granted licenses.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (2024-25)**

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 26th June, 2025 from 1100 hours to 1410 hours in Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Nishikant Dubey- Chairperson

MEMBERS

LokSabha

2. Shri Anil Baluni
3. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
4. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
5. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
6. Shri G. Kumar Naik
7. Shri Radheshyam Rathia
8. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
9. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
10. Shri Devesh Shakya
11. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma

RajyaSabha

12. Shri Saket Gokhale
13. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
14. Dr. Sasmit Patra
15. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
16. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y. M. Kandpal | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Amrish Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

Welcoming members to the sitting of the Committee, the Chairperson drew their attention to the Agenda for the sitting which included consideration and adoption of the 4 Draft Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on DFG (2025-26) and evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Electronics and Information and Technology (MeitY), Ministry of Home Affairs,

Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Power on the Subject ‘Impact of emergence of Artificial Intelligence and related issues’.

The Committee then considered and adopted the following Draft Action Taken Reports:-

- (i) XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX...
 - (ii) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Third Report (18th Lok Sabha) on “Demands for Grants (2024-25)” relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
 - (iii) XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX...
 - (iv) XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX...
2. The Committee also authorized Chairperson to finalize the reports and present/lay them in Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament.
3. XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX.....XXXX...

The witnesses then withdrew.

A copy of verbatim record of the proceedings was kept on record.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

ANNEXURE – II

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THEIR THIRD REPORT

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

[Vide Paragraph No. 5 of Introduction]

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government	
Rec. Sl. Nos.: 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,13,14 and 15	
Total	10
Percentage	62.50
(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government	
Rec. Sl. No.: NIL	
Total	NIL
Percentage	0
(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration Rec. Sl. No.: NIL	
Total	NIL
Percentage	0
(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the replies of the Government are of interim in nature	
Rec. Sl. Nos.: 4,9,10,11,12 and 16	
Total	06
Percentage	37.50