

and development, growth of Radio and TV, consumer electronics etc.

(b) Yes, Sir. In the I.T.U. Broadcast Plan, India has been allowed frequency assignments for 780 transmitters of which 352 are of low power meant for the setting up of district/local level radio stations. This would enable A.I.R. to have 370 radio stations equipped with 780 mw transmitters of various ratings as against the present figure of 84 radio stations equipped with 124 MW transmitters only.

(c) Present rural coverage is already 88.44 per cent. However, new stations are set up from time to time subject to the availability of resources so as to maximise the rural as well as urban reach. Simultaneously programmes acceptable to rural population are also devised and put up.

Information Media for Farmers

*612. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a strong need of good information media for farmers in the country; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is attached.

Statement

The publicity package devised for dissemination of information to the farmers in the field comprises a mix of AIR/TV broadcasts, extension work through field Publicity units, distribution of printed literature through DAVP. In addition to this, the Directorate of Extension in the Ministry of Agriculture supports the agricultural development programmes through multi media communications

manned by professional communicators at the grass root level. This unit employs a mix of printed literature, audiovisual medium, inter-personal communication and multiple programme of seminars and workshops to the publicity package to the farmers at the grass root level.

2. All 84 AIR Stations broadcast rural programmes; out of these 49 Stations have special Farm and Home Units which provide on a regular basis technical/scientific information on agriculture and allied subject. Similarly in the TV, the network of 7 stations beam special programmes on agriculture and 5 SITE Continuity Transmitters viz. Raipur, Jaipur, Gulberga, Pij and Hyderabad are putting out programmes which are primarily rural. During the Rolling Plan for 1978-83, it is proposed to extend and reinforce rural coverage. The new thrust in the sound broadcast is also towards the establishment of local radio stations with a view to catering to the developmental needs on local basis. More Farm and Home Units are being established in A.I.R. for increasing the coverage. The number of Field Publicity Units is being increased in order that Publicity units equipped with audiovisual aids are enabled to disseminate the publicity package in the farthest corner of the country. Similarly the Directorate of Extension are extending the coverage and intensity for their publicity schemes for comprehensive coverage.

Difficulties faced by Cultural Associations due to Entertainment Taxes

*613. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention is drawn to the *Indian Express* dated the 13th February, 1978 that Cultural Associations find it difficult to hold festivals in the face of stiff entertainment taxes from which exemption was proving hard to come by;